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ABSTRACT

This project book, part of a set of materials written by the members of the Making Thinking Visible Project, reflects the discoveries of 30 elementary, high school, college, and community teachers' collaborative inquiry into students' thinking and the process of classroom observation and reflection. The document explains collaborative planning--a writing strategy that helps students develop a piece of writing by discussing key rhetorical considerations with a partner--and suggests ways that teachers may want to use this technique as part of the way they teach writing. The document has four sections: (1) Defining "The Making Thinking Visible Project"; (2) Introduction to Collaborative Planning; (3) Initiating Collaborative Planning: Some Practical Suggestions for Designing a Class; and (4) Classroom Inquiry: An Introduction to Research Based on Observation and Reflection. Objectives and goals, benefits and limitations, teaching strategies, teaching methods, and principles of collaborative planning are discussed in detail. Three figures are included; lists of the project members are attached. (PRA)

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Making Thinking Visible:
An Introduction to Collaborative Planning

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Additional information about the Making Thinking Visible Project is available, including a casebook of discovery memos and papers by members of the project, video tapes, and project newsletters. Please contact

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I. DEFINING *THE MAKING THINKING VISIBLE PROJECT*

This section of the project book anticipates ten initial questions you might have about *The Making Thinking Visible Project*, focusing on the following topics:

- purpose
- objectives
- origin
- role of Collaborative Planning
- objectives and goals
- criteria for involvement
- commitments of teachers involved
- support and development
- project assessment
- project book overview

WHAT IS THE MAKING THINKING VISIBLE PROJECT?

Making Thinking Visible is a classroom research project in which teachers and students use Collaborative Planning as a window through which to view the processes of thinking and writing. The purposes are threefold:

- to help students develop a repertoire of strategies for planning and writing
- to encourage students to reflect on their own problem-solving strategies and become more aware of themselves as thinkers
- to discover ways classroom inquiry conducted by teachers and students can enhance teaching and help make the processes of thinking, planning, and writing more visible

WHAT ARE THE OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT?

The primary objective for the project is ambitious but simple. By working together, we want to explore a new way of thinking about teaching writing that puts thinking processes in the forefront of instruction. If we can make thinking processes in writing visible in dramatic and well-articulated ways, we can make them teachable. That is, we can reduce some of the mystery that surrounds effective writing in the minds of teachers and students. And we can make sensible problem-solving strategies that successful writers use more available to our students.

The larger implications of making this process teachable go beyond instructional methods. They involve a new way to see and diagnose problems that gets at fundamental difficulties students face in their thinking and writing processes. And they show how we can capitalize on the real abilities of students, including those at risk in the schools, by giving them more and earlier experiences of being self-aware problem solvers, effective communicators, and successful learners.

To help achieve this objective, this group has formed an educational experiment in making thinking visible throughout the greater-Pittsburgh area. By using writing as the area of instruction and by using a new technique called Collaborative Planning, in which students model and reflect upon their own problem-solving strategies, we demonstrate both the untapped potential of these students and the strategies of literacy they need to learn.

At the same time, we are establishing an inter-academic structure that supports this change. This structure will help to create a climate of opinion in Pittsburgh area schools in which writing is treated as thinking, enabling teachers and students to approach literate acts as problem-solving. We hope this educational structure will expand into an informed network of teacher/researchers in schools throughout the area.

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT?

This project has its roots in inquiry, research and teaching that started at Carnegie Mellon and has come to involve teachers throughout Pittsburgh. In the last ten years of research in education, the "cognitive revolution" has given us a new picture of how humans behave--of how experts solve problems, of how novices struggle, and of how students learn. Much of the pioneering work in understanding writing as a thinking process has been done at Carnegie Mellon University. This research has provided some theoretical models and detailed observations of the mental processes and strategies that highly skilled writers use when they face new and difficult writing tasks. We believe these models provide invaluable help for guiding less experienced writers. However, we hope to discover a good deal more about the different ways teachers and students can apply this knowledge in the classroom.

Even though the Pittsburgh area has some of the best schools in the country, helping every student become fully literate is difficult. Many students who could become literate members of their community are lost, and many students who could become powerful, competent communicators, never become effective writers. One way to give students the power of literacy is to explore the roots of the problem--treating writing as a dynamic thinking process and teaching the problem-solving strategies that give writers control over that process. The barrier we face in teaching literacy is the barrier we hit in teaching all basic skills: students need to have a sense of themselves as problem solvers. They need to see and understand what it means to be learners, to be communicators, to be writers, and to be thinkers. By taking advantage of the recent research on writing as a thinking process, we believe we can help students see, understand, and learn to better control their own thinking processes so that they can achieve greater success in school and in their community.

Given all the constraints under which writing, like other basic skills, is currently taught, it makes sense to consider dramatic and workable innovations. Such innovations should question some traditional assumptions (e.g., seeing writing only in terms of correctness) and demonstrate what is possible by showing thinking processes in action--to students and teachers. One innovative method for making the thinking process more visible is Collaborative Planning. This technique allows students to work together while confronting real problems of communication. They can think through those problems and explore their own goals and strategies as writers--and in that process demonstrate what it means to have a reflective control of the writing and problem-solving processes.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING?

The educational innovation on which the project is based is Collaborative Planning--a process in which students carry out their problem solving and planning out loud with the help of a collaborator who sometimes models the planning process and also guides, questions, and supports the writer. The structure that underpins these Collaborative Planning sessions is provided by a set of research-based planning strategies, prompted by the Planner's Blackboard. The Planner's Blackboard is a visual representation of the elements writers consider when planning.

This combination of a collaborative process and the structured approach of the Planner's Blackboard for prompting writers not only helps teach problem-solving and planning strategies, but it also helps make the process of writing more visible to students and encourages them to be open to reflection. Thus, Collaborative Planning provides a base for a variety of activities--teaching and learning new strategies for planning, observing one's own thinking, and reflecting on the thinking and writing processes.

Collaborative Planning, the instructional technique at the core of this project, is based upon six years of basic research in planning by Linda Flower and John R. Hayes at Carnegie Mellon--work supported by the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Education--that examined how expert writers' planning strategies differed from those of novices. In addition to this research on expert/novice planning, Collaborative Planning is also the subject of two other major research projects at the Center. Although these studies are ongoing, it is clear that students tend to do relatively little problem solving or evaluation of their ideas on their own; however, a partner's direct prompting to plan makes a significant difference in what students can do, and these Collaborative Planning sessions stimulate far more self-aware thinking.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS?

One of the first objectives is to create a visible change in the quality of students' thinking. Available research shows that inexperienced writers who plan at all concentrate their thinking on the topic--thinking of things to say. However, to be strategic thinkers and effective communicators, they need to consider the whole problem in a writing task--to think about their purpose and audience, to anticipate how other people respond, and to use their knowledge of textual conventions to achieve a purpose. They need to have control of their own thinking that leads them

to review and consolidate plans in the way we now see only in more experienced writers.

Therefore, our first goal as teachers is to prompt and document visible changes in the kind and quality of planning that students are able to do. Using video and audio tapes lets us monitor our students' growth as they learn to use more of their own potential, giving us early information about students who need more or different kinds of help. Unlike most educational projects, we have the enormous advantage of looking directly at thinking and intervening directly in that process.

A second objective is to enable students to become more self-aware problem solvers. Learning new strategies for thinking about communication problems isn't enough if students don't transfer them to new situations. Schools can improve the chances for such transfer by teaching strategies in a variety of contexts. Helping students themselves become more aware of their own strategies is a second way.

Our second goal, then, is to promote and document an increase in students' own reflectiveness and self-aware control of their own problem solving. Various techniques including self-interviews, taped collaboration sessions, video letters, and a computer program developed for collaboration allow teachers to monitor (and show others) both the process of self-aware problem solving and the growth in students' sense of options and control.

A third objective is to understand how Collaborative Planning can be adapted to meet the needs of developing writers in a variety of high school, college, and community contexts. Meeting this objective requires an in-depth understanding of these diverse social and educational contexts. Thus, a major goal of this project is to understand how Collaborative Planning can be adapted to help student writers develop both more sophisticated writing strategies and an increased sense of awareness about their own thinking processes.

One result of the observations that teachers in this project make will be a series of brief discovery memos that will be shared with other members of the project. These memos will record and comment on classroom observations, giving everyone an on-going story of the students.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR JOINING THE PROJECT?

When you join *The Making Thinking Visible Project*, you become a Fellow of the Center for the Study of Writing and work with a Collaborative Planning team. Unlike teachers asked to pilot a curriculum, everyone on this project is a full collaborator who will naturally want to adapt the ideas and methods developed so far to fit their own goals and their own students. Becoming a member of this working group of teachers who conduct classroom inquiry is based on the following criteria:

- an interest in finding new ways to support and teach writing and an interest in classroom inquiry

- a determination to discover something about your own students such as how they plan, how writers collaborating can help each other, how writers adapt to different assignments, or how students might use technology (audio and video tapes or computers) in planning to write

- an enthusiasm for looking closely at what your students actually do and for encouraging them to look at their own writing processes and problem-solving strategies

- a willingness to share your observations, discoveries, and reflections in writing and discussion with other teachers

WHAT ARE COMMITMENTS OF TEACHERS JOINING THE PROJECT?

Being a Fellow of the Center and working on this project entails the following commitments:

- attending a one-day colloquium on Collaborative Planning and classroom inquiry early in the school year

- initiating Collaborative Planning in at least one of your classes each term so that you have opportunities to observe your students' planning

- scheduling time for your students to observe, reflect, and write about their own planning and writing processes

- collecting data on what your students are doing and saying in Collaborative Planning sessions; typically, in this kind of classroom inquiry, data collection includes observing your students and taking notes, making some audio or video recordings of students who are collaborating, gathering copies of students' assignments and written reflections about writing

- joining a monthly seminar at the Center for the Study of Writing where Fellows from all the teams help each other by talking about ways to conduct classroom inquiry, making suggestions on lesson plans and assignments, and presenting their observations about teaching Collaborative Planning and the discoveries being made by their students

- reflecting on your own observations and sharing them with the other members of the project in brief but regular discovery memos

- meeting as needed with your team for planning and discussion sessions

- consolidating your discovery memos and summarizing the results of your inquiry at the end of the year. Different ways teachers are already sharing ideas include writing an article for teachers unfamiliar with Collaborative Planning, writing a report for publication by the Center, submitting an article to an educational journal, presenting at an educational conference.

Project members will have support in their inquiry through on-going consultation with other members of their project team and access to a variety of relevant resources.

HOW HAS THE PROJECT BEEN SUPPORTED AND DEVELOPED?

The Making Thinking Visible Project has grown out of work at the Center for the Study of Writing at Carnegie Mellon--one of fifteen national research centers supported by the U. S. Office of Education (Office of Educational Research and Improvement). The Center for the Study of Writing, a collaboration of the University of California at Berkeley and Carnegie Mellon, conducts research on how people learn to write, on how strategies are used by different writers, and on how teaching, learning and writing itself fit into the social context of school and community. Making Thinking Visible was envisioned as a way to translate this research into action in the Pittsburgh schools.

The pilot year planning of this project involved both school and community leaders. We explored ways for new ideas to work within schools in talks with the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education's Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Writing and Speaking. In addition to the Pittsburgh Public Schools, our early collaboration also involved the Allegheny Presbyterian Center on Pittsburgh's North Side, which is concerned with ways in which problem solving and planning can contribute to community literacy in settings outside of school.

Support for this initiative to promote educational change through Making Thinking Visible has come from the Howard Heinz Endowment of the Pittsburgh Foundation, which has helped create a network of educators interested in innovative, thinking-based literacy education, linking elementary, middle, and high schools, colleges, and community centers in metropolitan Pittsburgh. In the 1989-1990 project year, this network included teachers and group leaders from the Pittsburgh Public Schools, Fox Chapel School District, Allegheny Presbyterian Center, Robert Morris College, Community College of Allegheny County, University of Pittsburgh, and Carnegie Mellon University. In the 1990-91 academic year the project again expanded to include those in the 1989-90 group and also added teachers from North Hills High School, Steel Valley High School, and Iroquois High School in Erie, PA.

HOW WILL THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT BE ASSESSED?

The project will be evaluated for its effectiveness in making thinking visible. The project evaluation focuses on the influences that Collaborative Planning has on students' thinking, planning, and writing, and it examines the usefulness and adaptability of Collaborative Planning in the teaching of writing. The evaluation procedures also document the impact of the project on the Pittsburgh educational community and its impact on the academic community beyond the city.

To assess the effectiveness of the project, we are using a variety of methods, including interviews, questionnaires, think-aloud protocols, an attitudinal measure for student writers, field notes, and detailed records. We found data from the pilot year to be quite informative in planning subsequent years of the project.

In addition to these planned evaluation procedures, we are also keeping track of surprises--unexpected spin-offs from the project, effects that we had not anticipated. All project participants help keep these records.

PROJECT BOOK OVERVIEW

The remainder of the project book is separated into three sections that introduce you to Collaborative Planning, suggest ways to implement it in your classes, and discuss the nature of classroom inquiry.

Section II: Introduction to Collaborative Planning identifies benefits, principles, and basic elements of Collaborative Planning, and then discusses the roles of the supporter and the Planner's Blackboard. This section also offers several examples of Collaborative Planning and individual planning.

Section III: Initiating Collaborative Planning discusses general ways you might use Collaborative Planning in your classes and then suggests a three-class sequence that works as one way to introduce the techniques to your students. This section concludes with a discussion of the importance of reflection.

Section IV: Classroom Inquiry begins by defining classroom inquiry and discussing some benefits and limitations. Then the section suggests one approach to classroom inquiry and offers a summary of how one project team used this approach during the pilot year. Finally, the section presents excerpts from several discovery papers written during the pilot year, which show how the teachers and community group leaders approach their inquiry, resolve problems, record and reflect on their observations.

NOTES

II. INTRODUCTION TO COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

This section of the project book introduces Collaborative Planning by addressing the following six areas:

- example of Collaborative Planning
- principles
- teaching collaborative planning
- the Planner's Blackboard
- some benefits
- role of the supporter
- additional examples

This section begins with a short example about Collaborative Planning followed by outlines of basic elements, benefits, and principles; it concludes with detailed examples that provide a more complete picture of both Collaborative Planning and individual planning.

AN EXAMPLE OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

When your students do Collaborative Planning, you might hear an exchange like this one between two college freshmen planning a paper. In this excerpt from a planning session, a student writer works with his supporter to identify examples that his audience will respond to.

Planner: And my audience . . . they're probably gonna expect a lot of examples. I'm gonna have to use a lot of examples to prove, to prove it to them that different writing styles exist, and I want my audience to be able to relate their own experiences to this and maybe see how it affects them.

Supporter: So, what kind of examples are you gonna use? Can you give me an example? An example . . .

Planner: Um . . . Okay. I'll give you a real big example. Switching from high school writing to college writing. [The writer goes on to elaborate his idea.]

Supporter: Great, Rick . . . . . It's excellent. Um . . . . But . . . . Okay, so that's an example for one of your points. What about an example for [your other idea of] how writing varies?

Notice that the supporter not only encourages the writer to elaborate his ideas and then assesses them, but also helps him keep track of where he is in his planning.

PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Collaborative Planning takes many forms, from conversations in the hall, to informal sessions in a dorm room or in class, to scheduled meetings or conferences where a planner lays out ideas to a group. For Collaborative Planning to be effective, students must adapt it to the specific writing task they face. Students can use Collaborative Planning before they write, in the middle of a draft, or as part of reviewing a text. However, when they design their planning sessions, three principles should apply:

- **Authority (and the "floor") belongs to the writer as a planner and thinker.**

Collaborative Planning is a chance for the writer to talk, think, and explore options. Focusing on the writer as a thinker (rather than on the text or a reader's response) encourages the writer to articulate and elaborate ideas, to recognize problems, and to build a plan based on his or her own ideas and emerging intentions.

- **The aim of this planning process is to build a richer network of goals, plans, ideas, and possibilities that are connected to one another across all areas of planning.**

The Planner's Blackboard should help students become more aware of their own ideas and planning process. It also prompts them to elaborate their goals, to build "how-to" plans for the text, and to discover connections among their ideas.

- **The supporter creates a collaborative social context that encourages the writer to shape his or her own purpose and build a more reflective plan for turning those goals into text.**

Although the supporter may see problems and offer criticism or suggestions as well as draw the writer out, he or she works in a spirit of collaboration to help the writer develop the writer's plan.

TEACHING COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

The teachers in the Making Thinking Visible Project have found that collaborative planning can be used productively by students of widely varying ages and abilities as long as the introductory explanations are adapted to the students' knowledge and experiences with both collaborative interaction and writing. Collaborative planning asks students to develop new skills that help them manage the difficult task of writing by becoming more skillful, effective planners and collaborators. Using collaborative planning helps students learn to be more like experienced writers who often consider rhetorical elements such as purpose, key points, audience, and conventions of organization, support, and design.

Collaborative planning is one way to help students in four critical areas that concern classroom teachers as we design lessons and select approaches to implement a curriculum. We want students to

- understand the curriculum, i.e., the content they're expected to learn,

- gain control of their planning process so that they learn to consider rhetorical elements that influence their writing,
- use the opportunity to reflect so that they can generalize beyond the specific situation,
- engage in dynamic interaction so that they become better collaborators, able to ask productive questions, able to work with another person to plan a text.

Working with other students in a supportive, cooperative environment provides scaffolding that enables individuals to understand concepts and complete activities that they might find much more difficult if they were working individually. The modeling they see when collaborative planning is introduced and the opportunity to work with a supporter give students the opportunity to use rhetorical elements seldom addressed by inexperienced writers. Built into collaborative planning is the opportunity to reflect so that students can recognize the strengths and weaknesses of their own planning/writing and have a chance to think about how they might improve their process. Collaborative planning engages students in interaction that lets them be both a supporter and a planner. As they become more skillful collaborative planners, they gain experience in the dynamics of interaction, strengthening their questioning strategies and listening skills as they learn to negotiate meaning, not only with their own values, expectations, and representations but also with those of their collaborator.

One of the easiest ways to increase the value of collaborative planning (and simultaneously reduce potential problems) is to build in adequate time for preliminary explanations and modeling. Learning about the purposes for the process (e.g., through discussion of elements often considered by experienced writers, with scaffolding to accomplish what couldn't be done individually) and having the opportunity to practice in a limited and controlled situation increases the likelihood that their own collaborative planning sessions will be productive rather than perfunctory. Another way to increase the value of collaborative planning for students is to incorporate ways for them to track the benefits they gain from using it. Having students regularly reflect on their process helps, but they can also be encouraged to trace the impact of their planning on the texts they create.

Collaborative planning can affect the way some classes are structured and managed. There's no question that using collaborative planning takes some preparation, initially in terms of teaching the concepts and providing sufficient opportunities for collaborative activities. In fact, using collaborative planning almost always increases the time students need to complete an assignment because it increases the time students spend planning and replanning. For example, one variation of collaborative planning has students use tape recorders to tape their planning sessions that they can later listen to as they reflect on the nature of their own planning. Although using tape recorders has definite benefits, there are also expenses, both in money for the equipment and in additional class time. Using tape recorders complicates class management because students need to be taught to use them (and they all need microphones as well as batteries or access to an electrical outlet). Extra time needs to be allocated for distributing the equipment and getting into groups (and straightening the room at the end of class). However, this increase in time often has immediate and long-range benefits: in the short-term, students generally feel better about the effort they put into their papers; in the long-term, they strengthen their skills as planners and have the opportunity to reflect on their thinking and writing processes.

Teachers in the Making Thinking Visible Project have introduced collaborative planning to their students in a variety of ways. The overall focus of this section is exploring ways

we can help students have productive collaborative planning sessions. So the section begins by suggesting a series of pedagogical approaches that most teachers in the Making Thinking Visible Project have used. We believe that students benefit from using a metaphor that helps them recall and visualize all aspects of planning, so three different visual metaphors are included. Then the discussion concentrates on the responsibilities of students who engage in collaborative planning. Next, the discussion encourages reflection as part of collaborative planning. The section concludes with a discussion regarding the adaptation of collaborative planning to different kinds of students in a variety of courses, leading into the next section that highlights how two experienced teachers adapted collaborative planning to their classes. Regardless of the way a teacher chooses to use collaborative planning, the topics discussed in this section--finding a metaphor, modeling, questioning, understanding collaborative responsibilities, and reflecting--have been consistently important.

For many students, using collaborative planning will be a departure from the way they've become accustomed to planning their papers. Teachers in the Making Thinking Visible Project have developed a series of suggestions that increase the likelihood that students will understand more about their own writing process and become more effective planners, both individually and collaboratively. Writing teachers can introduce collaborative planning to their students by considering the following points:

1. Most students don't understand the critical role of planning and replanning in the writing process. Students need to have explanations of and to see examples of ways that planning can help them. The Planner's Blackboard helps to remind students about the areas they should consider in planning.

2. Carefully modeling the interaction between a writer and a good supporter helps students see what the preocess involves. They hear good questioning strategies and see the give and take discussion between the writer and supporter. Some teachers model collaborative planning themselves and some ask students to act as model writer/supporter teams for the class.

3. Students who are in the supporter role almost always need specific help with designing clarifying, extending, and evaluating questions that will be beneficial to writers. Developing the ability to ask the right questions initially helps supporters, but also seems to help writers with their own plans.

4. Building in time for students to reflect on their collaborative planning sessions gives students the opportunity to consider their own writing for the particular paper, but it also gives them a chance to consider how their new skills can generalize the other situations. One way to do this is to permit students to audio tape their planning sessions and play back the tapes so that they learn about themselves as writers and supporters. Listening should enable writers to reflect on their own planning process and should enable supporters to determine whether they are helping a writer to develop her plan or merely telling the writer what to do. Another suggestion, if tape recorders are unavailable, is to have a third member of the class take notes on the planning session and act as a "recorder" for the writer and supporter, providing feedback for them on what their session accomplished.

5. Teachers who can observe and listen to collaborative planning sessions often identify specific problem areas and can then suggest ways that students can improve their process and their products. Students can also observe and listen to

their own collaborative planning sessions, either first-hand or on audio or video tapes, in order to understand their own thinking and planning processes.

6. Students benefit from having time to think about rhetorical elements when they participate in class discussions, prepare oral presentations, or design displays. Collaborative planning can be extended to other kinds of assignments demonstrates that planning and collaboration should not just be limited to writing assignments. Students can extend collaborative planning outside the classroom by working with friends from other classes or with someone from their family acting as a supporter.

Collaborative planning needs a writer, a supporter, and a tentative plan. Student writers might want to use the following process when they are in the role of the planner. (This explanation of the process is addressed directly to the students.)

- **Think over your plan for your paper.** Get a sense of key ideas, main point, purpose, organization, and so on. You may want to jot notes or even draft pieces of text. Meet with your partner or supporter when you are ready to talk about your plan.

- **Take charge of your planning session.** Tell your supporter how he or she might help you most. Do you want to use your collaborative session to brainstorm, to let you try out ideas in a loose and informal way? Do you need to talk out your understanding of the assignment? Or do you want your supporter to listen like a reader (or your instructor) might, to spot problems, to notice gaps?

  Since writers need different kinds of help at different times, design this session about what you need most. Make the planning session work for you. However, it is also important to be flexible and receptive; your supporter may notice problems you don't see.

- **Explain, explore, elaborate your plan.** Where should you start? If your plan is still sketchy, you might want to start by talking over the task as you see it or examining ideas you find interesting and want to include. Tell your supporter about tentative ideas, alternatives, things you would like to accomplish; talk about what you think your readers might expect or how they might respond. If your plan is more developed, you might jump right in by explaining your purpose and goals for this paper and zeroing in on key points.

  The Planner's Blackboard gives you a way to visualize key elements that experienced writers often include in their planning. Use the Planner's Blackboard as a prompt to be sure you have covered the important things that need to be in a good plan. Your supporter can play a critical role here by noticing where you need to think about what your reader needs, where your purpose seems unclear, or where you could start planning how to translate a good idea into text using different conventions, formats, or techniques, such as problem/purpose statements, examples or headings. But be careful not to let the blackboard become a straitjacket or to let your planning session turn into a rigid question-and-answer session. Although the goal is to explore your whole plan, you may want to focus on a special area. Remember that you, as the planner, have to take charge of this session and make it to work for you.

- **Observe and then reflect on your own planning.** Collaborative Planning gives you an exceptional window on your planning process that lets you discover strategies that work well for you as well as decisions or strategies that may cause trouble. The best reflection comes when you can actually observe (not just remember) what you and your supporter said and did. You may want to use a tape recorder (placed unobtrusively) to make a tape of the entire planning session. Just turn it on and ignore it until you are done, as your private, silent scribe. Listening privately to your tape after the session can help you give a name to some effective "things you have always done without thinking about it." But it may also reveal some things which surprise you.

SOME BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

One of the most effective ways to get ideas and to improve writing is for the writer to talk over the plan with a good listener. You can explain to students that when they talk about their plan, four important things can happen. (This explanation of the benefits is addressed directly to the students.)

- As you explain and explore your ideas, your purpose, your point, you are actually elaborating and developing your plan. You may even have breakthroughs to new ideas and see new connections.

- Talking out your plans to someone else helps you stand back, see the big picture, and test ideas before you produce draft that you might be reluctant to change.

- Your partner can respond in a variety of specific ways, depending on what you need--giving you support and encouragement by noting what works well, asking questions that help you elaborate parts of the plan (such as imagining how a reader will respond), making suggestions, or responding like a reader or sounding board on which to test this plan for your paper.

- Finally, doing Collaborative Planning (and making notes or a tape) lets you observe your own thinking and problem-solving process in action--it lets you reflect on the strategies that work for you and become more aware of your own writing process.

FINDING A METAPHOR

Since one of the overall goals of collaborative planning is to help students become more like experienced writers in their consideration of rhetorical elements such as purpose and audience, they need a way to visualize and hold in their heads these rhetorical elements. Giving students a metaphor (or letting them come up with their own) is one effective way to help them keep track of these rhetorical elements. A metaphor gives students a way to remember the elements of planning and visualize the relationship of these elements to one another. The Planner's Blackboard provides one visual metaphor that many teachers in the Making Thinking Visible project have used to remind students about the elements that they should consider in planning. Each rhetorical of the elements--purpose, key point, audience, conventions of organization, support, and design--are given separate planning spaces but connected by arrows that indicate the interaction among these elements. And all

of the elements are placed within the context of the content that will be the subject matter of the students' papers.

However, the Planner's Blackboard is not the only metaphor that you could use when you introduce collaborative planning to your students. Even though we have generally found the Planner's Blackboard easy for students to understand, teachers in the project have experimented with other metaphors. For example, fifth-grade students developed their own metaphor--a map that showed how they moved through their writing process, replete with stopping places for reflection and bogs a writer could drown in. Although this map portrays writing as a linear process, a view that we discourage, the map helped these fifth graders understand more about how planning and collaboration could help they create better papers. Similarly, a software version of collaborative planning, Planner's Options®, displays another image of the content and rhetorical elements that typically concern writers as they plan. Planner's Options® uses a maze metaphor that removes the linearity of the map and helps students understand that they can reach their goal (a well-planned paper) in a number of different ways. The important thing is to find a metaphor that works for you and your students. Consider the Planner's Blackboard first, but feel free to modify it so that the planning process makes sense to your students.

THE PLANNER'S BLACKBOARD: A PROMPT FOR BUILDING BETTER PLANS

What does a good plan look like? A "good plan" is going to be unique and specific to the writer's purpose. However, the plans that experienced writers build often look different from those of less experienced writers in two ways: first, they focus on three key areas (purpose, audience, and text conventions) in addition to what the writer wants to say (topic/content). Second, these expert plans are more elaborated and developed with more links between different parts of the plan.

For example, when student writers plan, they often use brainstorming or freewriting to develop lots of ideas. These are good strategies, but a good plan includes more than ideas about the topic or "things to say" in the text. When expert writers plan, they spend a good deal of their time not only on *topic* knowledge, but thinking about what their *key points* should be and deciding on their *purpose* or *goals* (things they want to accomplish in writing this paper).

They also try to imagine their *readers*: Expert writers often ask themselves questions such as "What do my readers expect? What do they already know? How will they respond to my plan, to my ideas, or my presentation?"

Experienced writers then go a step further: they think about different ways they could carry out their goals in text--ways to emphasize a key point, to convince a reader, or to develop a paragraph. They think about the different *conventions of written text* they might use such as the genre features of a journal entry or an editorial, organizing plans such as comparison/contrast, rhetorical techniques like examples and quotation, and ways to format and present a text such as using headings to organize, italics to emphasize, or bullets to list.

Finally, these writers not only only build a more elaborate plan, with ideas in all of these four areas, they also think about *links* between these parts of their plan. For example, they talk about text conventions that might dramatize their key point. They come up with ideas that anticipate questions a reader might have.

And they develop their own goals and plans by imagining what their reader already knows or thinks or expects.

PURPOSE, AUDIENCE, TEXT, and ***TOPIC***--they are only four areas, but they can add up to a lot to keep in mind for a student writer who is planning a paper. And sometimes writers find it hard to tear themselves away from just generating things to say (topic information). The Planner's Blackboard is a graphic reminder to build a plan that covers all of these areas. We have found the following comments are one useful way of introducing and explaining the Planner's Blackboard:

> Imagine that you have a set of mental blackboards in the back of your mind, waiting to be filled with plans and ideas--the more the better. Whenever you come with an idea or think about the reader, or visualize the way your text might be organized, you have just posted another idea on one of these blackboards. Whenever you see a link between your purpose and audience or between a text convention and your key point, you have drawn a new link between those blackboards. Your goal is a mental blackboard filled with scribbled notes and links.
>
> How should you use the Planner's Blackboard? Think of it as a prompt--a visual metaphor that reminds you to think about the four areas of topic information, putrpose, audience, and text contentions when you are planning. Or use it to review your plan-as-it-now stands: Where is it elaborated and where does it seem skimpy or even blank? Or when you are a supporter, listen with the blackboards in mind: What areas could you encourage the writer to elaborate on?
>
> You don't need to have a literal blackboard with blank spaces; you can jot your ideas on any sheet of paper or computer. The blackboard image is to remind you to consider a variety of important elements in your planning. When they first see the blackboards, some writers use them as a kind of outline--actually writing little notes to themselves in the different boxes. For most writers, however, the tiny space on the blackboards is a rather rigid straitjacket on their ideas, and they prefer the freedom of talking out ideas and taking notes in a more normal way.

Encourage your students to treat the Planner's Blackboard as an imaginary, metaphorical blackboard and a prompt, rather than a check sheet to fill in or a recipe to follow.

The following figures illustrate two ways to visualize the Planner's Blackboard. Showing your students different representations enables them to understand that the Planner's Blackboard is a flexible concept, not a rigid prescription. In fact, you can encourage them to construct a representation of their own Planner's Blackboard.

Figure 1 shows four areas that writers need to consider in separate, clearly defined spaces, reminding students that they need to give attention to each during their planning. The linking line reminds them that these areas are not isolated; rather, they are interdependent. For example, decisions about what content to include are certainly influenced with the audience. And identification of audience influences conventions such as organization of the content.

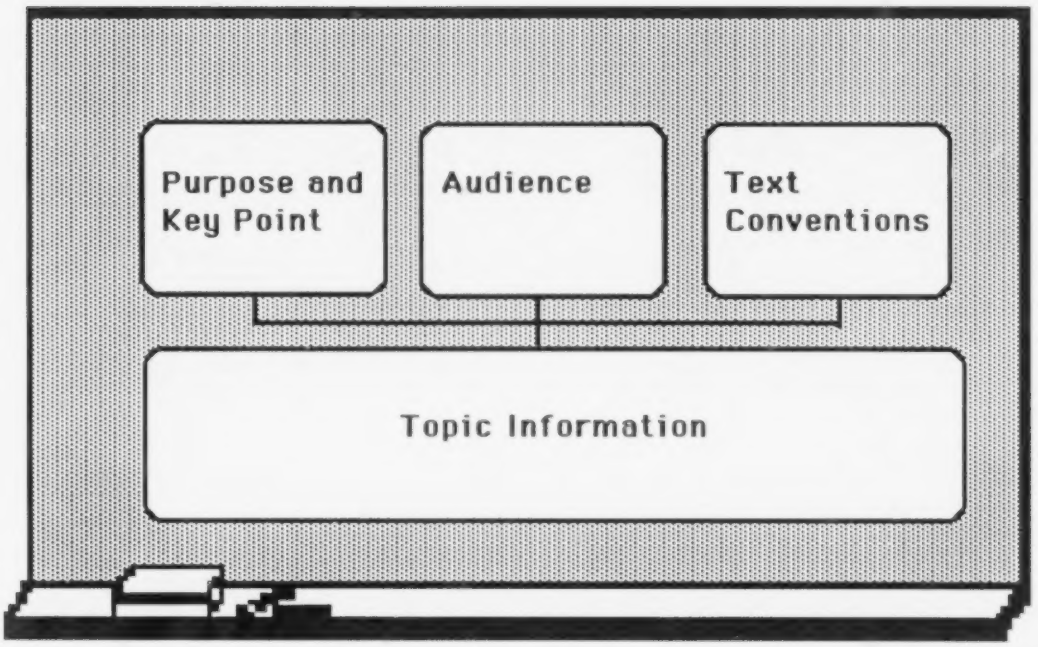


Figure 1: Representation of the Planner's Blackboard

Figure 2 lets you imagine that the topic information is the background you start with. On top of this topic information, you need to make decisions about your purpose and key point, your audience, and the text conventions you plan to use. Once you have selected the topic information and determined the purpose and key point, the audience, and the text conventions, you begin to establish links between the blackboards, represented by the arrows on the figure. Following the figure are a list of the kinds of ideas that writers can post on their own mental blackboards.

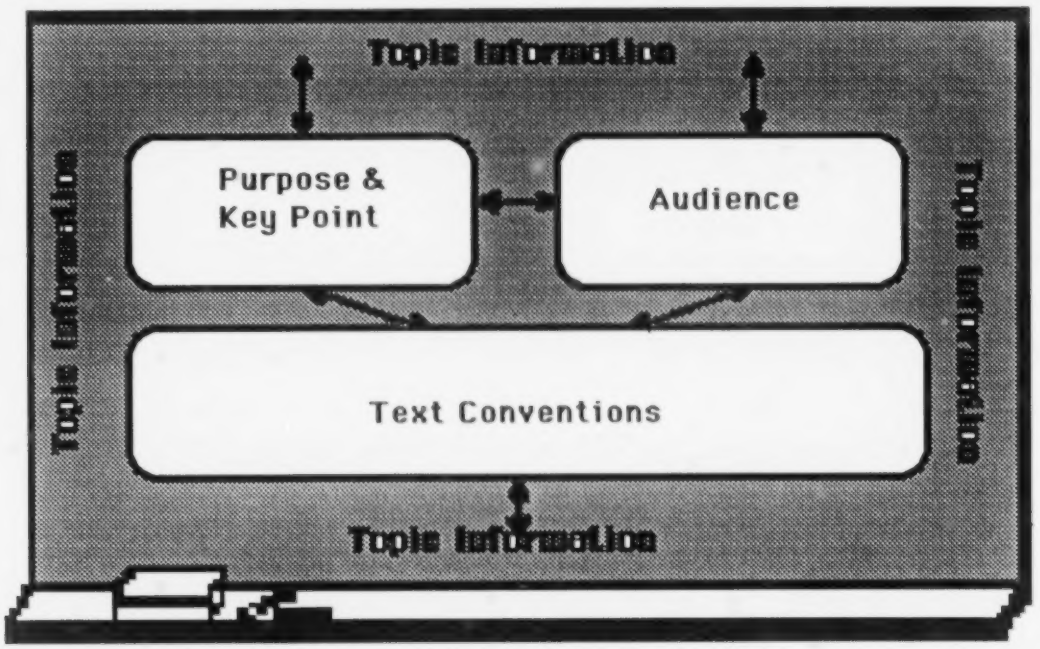


Figure 2: Representation of Planner's Blackboard

Students find it very helpful to learn about the kinds of information that they can post on their mental blackboards--regardless of how they represent it-- as they take notes on their own paper or write at their computer workstation.

Topic Information Blackboard
- Interesting ideas, relevant points you want to include
- Specific words, phrases, draft sentences

Purpose and Key Point Blackboard
- The main purpose of the paper
- The supporting goals, plans, or things you hope to accomplish
- The key point you want to get across

Audience Blackboard
- Things your reader expects or needs to know
- What you want someone to think after reading the paper
- Ways your reader might respond to what you have just said

Text Conventions (the how-to-do-it-in-writing) Blackboard
- Features of different genres that fit your purpose (e.g., a problem/purpose statement, citation of sources, dialogue, a news "lead," a graph, an anecdote)
- Conventional patterns of organization and development (e.g., topic sentences, summaries, definitions, comparisons, reasons, examples, transitions)
- Visual cues to the reader (e.g., headings, sections, italics, bullets)

Links Between Blackboards
- Ideas that involve Information, Purpose, Audience, and/or Text
- Reasons for one plan based on another blackboard (e.g., setting a goal or using a text convention because of the audience)

Collaborative planning seems to work well when students see it as a normal part of their preparation rather than as a special, once-in-a-while activity. They can be encouraged to teach their metaphor to others outside their class to be supporters; for example, they could work with friends from other classes or with someone from their family. Another way to establish this sense of planning as part of an effective and regular composing process is to incorporate some aspect of it into as many communication tasks as possible. For example, students can be encouraged to think about rhetorical elements when they participate in class discussions, prepare oral presentations, or design displays.

MODELING

Even when students understand the concept of collaborative planning and recognize the rhetorical elements they'll consider during planning, they need to see what collaborative planning looks like and how effective collaborators interact. Virtually every teacher in the Making Thinking Visible Project advocates the use of modeling as one of the most effective ways to introduce collaborative planning to students because it enables them to see the process in action.

The roles of the writer and supporter and their interaction can be modeled in several different ways:

- Two teachers model the planner and supporter roles.
- A teacher models the role of the supporter with a student or students.
- The teacher shows a video tape with a planner and supporter planning together.

Regardless of the method (or combination of methods), the writing assignment that the planner and supporter discuss should be one the students understand and see as relevant to their class. Three examples can illustrate the flexibility and benefit of modeling.

In the first situation, *two teachers model the planner and supporter roles*. This modeling requires that the teachers plan beforehand--just as their students would. Both the planner and supporter need to make sure they understand the assignment--the writer thinks of how to approach the assignment; the supporter considers useful questions to ask the writer. The following example shows how two community college teachers introduced collaborative planning to their first-year composition classes. They both prepared their students beforehand by introducing new terminology and identifying the kinds of questioning the students would hear. They each came into the other's class; each teacher played the planner/writer in his own class and planned the assignment his students were working on. The colleague played the supporter. They asked their students to keep track of the interaction--what kinds of questions predominated, who did the most talking, who contributed ideas, and so on. After the 15-minute modeling session, the teachers asked the students to describe what they had seen and to assess the benefits of the collaborative planning. (Of course, one of the benefits of this modeling is that students see their teachers as writers.) The final 10 minutes of class were spent reviewing the preparation students needed--as both planners and supporters--in order to engage in productive collaborative planning during the next class.

Another type of modeling occurs when *a teacher models the role of the supporter with a student or students*. In the following situation a teacher in an inner-city high school invited a university colleague into her ninth-grade English class. The two teachers

coordinated a four-part lesson in a 50-minute class. The lesson began with the ninth-grade teacher reviewing with the students their upcoming writing assignment and collaborative planning terminology with the students. Then the two teachers modeled collaborative planning: The teacher assumed the role of the writer, planning the same assignment that her students were about to begin. Her colleague played a dual role--supporter to her as a writer who was planning an assignment and commentator making asides to the students about what was happening (e.g., "I asked her to explain because . . . ." "This is a good opportunity for a followup question . . . ." "Here she needs to make a connection between . . . ." "Notice how she can answer this because she planned before our session together."). After about ten minutes, the supporter invited the students to join her as supporters; they received immediate feedback about their questions--responses from the writer and assessment from the commentator. Finally, the ninth-grade teacher explained that the students would be working together in planner-supporter pairs the next day. She reviewed the preparation they needed to complete as homework.

A third kind of modeling occurs when *the teacher shows a video tape with a planner and supporter planning together*. The use of a video tape introduces additional difficulties (for example, getting the equipment), but it also provides the benefits of a "set piece" that a teacher can select in order to illustrate certain aspects of collaborative planning. In this situation a composition teacher in a four-year college introduced her students to collaborative planning first by explaining the concept and then by having them view a video-tape of two students engaged in collaborative planning. At predetermined points in the interaction, the teacher stopped the tape and asked the students in her class to describe what was going on and then to suggest ways it might have been improved--for both the planner and the supporter. The teacher noted when students commented on different aspects of the interaction--content, paralinguistic elements, rhetorical elements and so on. As in the other two examples, the final minutes of class were spent reviewing the preparation students needed in order to engage in productive collaborative planning during their next class.

Several common factors cut across these three examples: First, students benefit from seeing and hearing an *actual* collaborative planning session--rather than just hearing *about* it. Second, in each example the students received an explanation of what was going on--for example, as it was happening with the ninth graders, as part of their self-constructed assessment with the four-year college students. Third, students had the opportunity to contribute to the collaborative planning, either by actually asking questions as a supporter or by suggesting better questions that might have been asked. Fourth, the importance of preparing--both as a writer and supporter--is emphasized.

As part of the discussion that follows a modeling session, teachers can bring up the issue of pairing. Teachers need to make decisions about how their students should be paired and whether these pairings should be maintained or changed from assignment to assignment. Considering student opinions when making these decisions can have a positive impact on the students' attitudes. Generally, groups work better when they are heterogeneous (by gender, ethnicity, race, ability, and so on), but more important than these generalizations are the social and interpersonal interactions of students in a particular class. In some classes, student-selected partners work best (working with teacher-established criteria, e.g., "Select a supporter you think can ask useful questions."); in other classes, the teacher may prefer to assign the pairings.

Once students have watched collaborative planning in action, they are ready to generalize about the roles and responsibilities of the writer/planner and supporter. Many teachers in the Making Thinking Visible project have found the following summary a useful way to begin this discussion.

Your collaborative planning sessions will be more helpful if you understand your roles as a writer and as a supporter.

WRITER	SUPPORTER
• have a preliminary plan that you can explain	• be an active listener so you can understand the writer's plan
• be open to suggestions that may help you improve the plan	• offer comments that help the writer think about the plan's strengths and weaknesses
• give thoughtful responses to questions	• encourage exploration by asking probing questions
• be flexible so you can improve your plan	• be interested, attentive, and engaged

As you gain experience with both planning and collaboration, you will be able to extend these lists with suggestions that you find personally helpful. You be able to indicate what in your own planning process is most productive and results in the most successful product. You'll be able to tell your supporter where you need the most assistance and what collaborative approach will be most helpful to you.

Supporters help the writers develop and elaborate their own plans. Good supporters listen carefully to the writer's plan and figure out how to help the planner keep thinking. Many teachers in the Making Thinking Visible Project have found that the following comments and strategies, addressed directly to students are effective for introducing the supporter's role.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPPORTER

Supporters play a critical role in making a Collaborative Planning session work. Supporters differ from critics, peer editors, or teachers: their job is not to find faults or to tell the writer "how you would do it." Supporters *help the writers develop and elaborate their own plans*. Good supporters listen carefully to the writer's plan and figure out how to help the planner keep thinking. We have found that the following comments and strategies, addressed directly to students, are effective for introducing the supporter's role.

How can you be a good supporter? Because you are the one who gets to sit and listen, you will be able to keep the goals of the Planner's Blackboard in mind. Try to figure out how you can encourage your planner to build a better or more developed plan, especially in the key areas of the blackboard. Here are some things good supporters do. But you will have to decide which of these supporting strategies will help your planner most.

- Listen carefully and reflect the "gist" of what you heard back: "What I hear you saying is that_____. Am I hearing you right? "

- Ask the planner to elaborate. "You just said _____; tell me more about _____ [what you mean or why you said that].

- Ask about key parts of the blackboard that the planner has only explained in a sketchy way. "If your purpose is _____, how are you going to do that? What are your other goals?"

- Ask--from time to time-- how different parts of the plan are connected, especially when you see possible links or problems. "If your key point here is _____, how do you think your readers will respond to that?" Or "Is there any link between your purpose and the format you plan to use?"

- Share your perception of the task or alternative strategies the writer might consider. " I saw the assignment a little differently; let's talk about what our options are. " Or, "You might use an example here." Or "That's an important point you could emphasize."

- Let the writer know when you feel confused or see a problem. You don't need to have a solution; just give feedback about how the plan works for you. "I feel lost at this point; why did you say that?" "I don't know what you mean when you say _____." "Can you tell me how this part of the paper is linked to that part?" Your feedback as a "live reader/listener" (rather than as a critic or advice-giver) can help the writer begin to imagine how other readers might respond and start to plan with them in mind.

QUESTIONING

In order to be effective collaborative planners, students need to be able to ask (and answer) good questions. However, students acting as supporters often need specific help with structuring questions that will be helpful to writers. Many need help constructing both initial and followup questions. Developing the ability to ask the right questions initially helps supporters, but also seems to help writers with their own plans. Students also need to be reminded that their questions should ask about more than content; the questions should focus on rhetorical elements:

- purpose and key points,

- audience,

- conventions of organization and support,

- conventions of design.

Because many students have a difficult time coming up with questions, a number of teachers have used the following list of generic questions as a way to help students formulate questions. The questions are merely examples that must be used cautiously; that is, generic questions often result in generic responses, which are of minimal value in planning a paper. Students need to be encouraged to modify these questions so they reflect an understanding of the writer's specific content, purpose, and audience. Students also need to learn that productive planning usually doesn't result from asking a series of lock-step questions, preplanned and packaged without regard to the writer's content, purpose, or audience. Instead, productive planning more often evolves from a sequence of

questions adapted to the specific situation, including thoughtful, inquisitive, and perhaps even tough followup questions that ask the writer to clarify, extend, and evaluate.

CONTENT
What more can you say about _____?
What additional information might you include?
Tell me more about _____.
Have you considered including _____?
What additional information might you include?
I think ____ will be a good thing to include.

PURPOSE/KEY POINT
What do you see as your main point [purpose]?
Am I right that your key point [or purpose] is _____?
What did you mean by _____?
Could you clarify your point about _____?
I can't quite see why you've decided to _____.
Could you explain why? (asking for justification)
A point you haven't mentioned yet is _____.
I see a conflict between _____ and _____? How will you deal with it [resolve it]?

AUDIENCE
Who is your intended audience [reader]?
What does the reader expect to read [learn]?
How do you think your reader will react to _____?
Why is this the appropriate audience?
How will your audience connect _____ to _____?
What problems [conflicts, inconsistencies, gaps] might your reader see?

TEXT CONVENTIONS
Consider both (1) document design elements and (2) global and local elements of organization, development, support, and style.
How do you plan to *explain* _____?
How will you *organize* [develop, explain] this?
What *support* [or evidence] will you use? What *examples* will you use?
Have you considered using _____ [text convention]? How do you think it would work?
Couldn't you also try _____ [text convention]?
How does this [convention] let you deal with _____?
Is your paper going to have a _____ [convention]?
I like ____ better than ____ as a way to explain this idea.

CONSOLIDATION (separate or incorporated)
How does _____ relate to [develop, clarify] _____?
Given your purpose [audience], will you use ____ text convention?
How are you going to connect _____ and _____?
Is there a conflict between using _____ and _____?
I'm not sure ____ will make sense to this audience.
I think _____ is a good way to explain your key point to this audience.

Knowing these questions and understanding the importance of adapting them to a specific situation often isn't sufficient. Students seem to benefit from analyzing excerpts from the collaborative planning sessions of others. The following three excerpts illustrate

different types of writer-supporter interaction. If the excerpts are presented without preliminary assessment by the teacher, students will begin to draw strong distinctions among the supporter behaviors, suggesting those that they believe are productive and those that aren't.

Excerpt #1 presents a supporter who agrees with nearly everything the writer says; although the supporter is cooperative, he doesn't give the writer any help. Students usually see that although the presence of another person may encourage a writer to keep talking and, thus, consider more ideas, in general this neutral stance is not particularly productive and give the impression of a supporter who is not very interested in the writer's planning. Students can be encouraged to suggest supporter questions and comments they believe would be more productive or provocative. One short, in-class activity can have several small groups of students each work to suggest an approach the supporter in Excerpt #1 might have taken. Typically, each group comes up with a different approach, which can be used to point out that collaborators can work together in many different ways, many of which can be productive; seldom can a single approach be identified as "the best."

SUPPORTER EXCERPT #1

Writer: I need a summary writeup. I need that.

Supporter: Right.

Writer: I need something to introduce it and to summarize it.

Supporter: Right. And I thought that--

Writer: And also something to try and sell it a little better, I think.

Supporter: Right.

Writer: And really talk about why, why solar heating is for you and why this system is more efficient than other systems. And then once, once I've introduced that and said, ok, like, uh, "We have a two-speed summer-winter operation." You know, just generally state all these things that make ours better. Then go into detail below, have, like, a the picture of the thermostat system, uh, you know, schematics of how that connects the-- how it's different for summer and winter, and explain it better.

Supporter: Mmuh.

Writer: But start with the picture.

Supporter: Aah, that's interesting.

Writer: You know, of course, as a new employee, I would have to find out, like, how our company deals with graphics, like, do we have people who--

Supporter: Right.

Writer: --would do that or do I have to send out and have the pictures made? Do I have to do all the pictures?

Supporter: Right.

Writer: Or do we have, like, a publication artist to work on all that--

Supporter: Right.

Writer: Which is another reason not to revise the whole memo, I guess. Just to kind of, uh, you know, get started; save my ideas for what I want in the drawings.

Supporter: So, you couldn't do it all yourself anyway.

Writer: Right.

Supporter: Right.

Writer: But I wouldn't want to, like, you know, go into the whole thing and, uh, have someone else working on it with me and doing all this without consulting my supervisor.

Supporter: Right.

Excerpt #2 shows a supporter who is alert and interested, but remains relatively neutral. He makes comments and asks questions that are specific to this writer's plans, but he contributes little to the plan. Again, students can suggest alternative comments and questions that the supporter might have used. Here, however, since the supporter offers more, the writer is more responsive; thus, students can also suggest differences in what the writer says during the collaborative planning session.

SUPPORTER EXCERPT #2

Supporter: Ok. You mentioned, um, several pictures [papers rustling] -- I thought that was really important, too.

Writer: It looked like a doodle he'd made on the phone. My vision was, like, to have it more based on pictures and have an explanation of the picture. Like, one--

Supporter: That's a good idea.

Writer: --one problem I had was with, uh, how he tossed all those temperatures into the, into the paragraph and you had to, like, you had to really think about what was going on in order to understand what these temperatures meant. And I thought if you had a drawing of each part of the system, like a drawing of the collector, and you could give the temperatures in, like, outline right on the drawing, and it would just--

Supporter: Right.

Writer: --make it so much more visual and easier to see what's going on.

Supporter: Right. Or you could make, like, a little, like an outline of a house and put words to go with this building.

Writer: Right.

Supporter: Not just this thing in air floating somewhere.

Writer: Right. More, well, less abstract than that, more like a real situation that someone would have.

Supporter: Would you want, like, a little, like, paragraph applied next to the picture? explaining it? or, or totally everything in the text of the, of the, uh, brochure, you know, like, how with the illustrations, there'll be, like, a small paragraph explaining it?

Writer: Yeah. I wanted to have, like, maybe have two columns, a column of graphics and a column of text explaining it. Have, you know, the picture right across from the explanation--

Supporter: Ooh. So the whole thing would be made up of that?

Writer: Yeah.

Supporter: Aah.

Writer: So that-- well. Ok.

The supporter in Excerpt #3 is more aggressive, but also more involved. She asks the writer points questions and encourages rethinking of how to approach the audience for this assignment. Here, students can discuss what they see as the benefits and disadvantages of the supporter taking an aggressive stance. Are there particular writers with whom this would be effective? Are there others with whom it would be seen as detrimental?

SUPPORTER EXCERPT #3

Writer: I would like to talk to my supervisor about this before I really write the memo. Just kind of informally, see if these things are possible before I go out on a limb.

Supporter: Yeah. So would that talking with him, would that be the point of this memo?

Writer: Well, not really--

Supporter: You can't really--

Writer: because I want the memo to be seen by more than just the supervisor.

Supporter: Like, you mean you're going to, you know, draft that? Talk to your supervisor?

Writer: Well, gee, I don't know. I don't know if I should-- If I can decide if this stuff is possible, I can write the memo ..... What do you think?

Supporter: Uh ... I just thought that your memo would be pretty much the first communication and that maybe you're expected to be, like, a bit autonomous in this--

Writer: Yeah. That's kind of a problem with my wanting to talk to him about this before I write anything.

Supporter: It seems like he doesn't even want to deal with it.

Writer: Yeah. That's a problem that I'm going to have to, uh, think about .... If I, if I should go out on a limb--

Supporter: Yeah.

Writer: --and hope that if my supervisor shouldn't like this one and snatched the memo out of circulation [laughter] and have me redo it right away, you know? [laughter] And I don't know that I can trust my supervisor to do that. Like, I feel that as a new employee in the company, I would want to, I'd want to show that I had potential, that I knew what I wanted to do and that I knew how to do it.

Supporter: Right. Right.

Overall, most students will judge the supporter in Excerpt #1 an ineffectual; however, they will probably disagree about the relative merits of the supporters in Excerpts #2 and #3--as well they should. Some writers prefer to work with a supporter who contributes a great deal to the plan; others resent it. In most situations, supporters balance their comments and questions with their suggestions, so the authority remains with the writer, but the supporter can raise relevant points that the writer hasn't yet considered. Of course, after you have taught collaborative planning several times, you can transcribe tapes of your own students' collaborative planning sessions and select excerpts to review specific aspects of interaction.

Reflection as Part of Collaborative Planning

To continue the development and refinement of their writing process, students can reflect on their collaborative planning process. The interplay between observation and reflection can inform both students and teachers both about the nature of the planning and collaboration and about problems that students encounter. Gathering the information for reflection can in itself be a reflective act, requiring students to think about what they have been doing and consider the impact and implications of these actions.

Reflection can be accomplished in several different ways. Those identified in the following list have been suggested by teachers in the Making Thinking Visible Project.

- *field notes*: The teacher or an observer student can take notes about the nature of a particular writer-supporter interaction--who's talking? how much? what kinds of questions are asked? what rhetorical elements are the focus? These notes--read back to the pair--can serve as the starting point for self-assessment of the interaction.

- *class discussions*: After a portion of a class period has been taken up with pairs of collaborative planning sessions, students can take part in a whole-class discussion in which they discuss the differences in the type of behaviors they saw in *themselves* as they switched roles: Which role did they feel more comfortable doing--writer or

supporter? Which role for them was more productive? What behaviors would they have liked to do differently?

- *journal entries/reflective memos*: Instead of having students take part in a whole-class discussion, some teachers prefer to have their students regularly record their reflections about their own writing process and their writer-supporter roles in a series of journal entries or reflective memos. If these journal entries are written regularly after collaborative planning sessions, students have a way to trace changes in their own attitudes and behaviors.

- *audio/video tapes*: Even better than recalling a collaborative planning session is listening to an audio tape or viewing a video tape. Student who listen to or view themselves often have remarkable observations about the role(s) they play--their questioning techniques, their passive or aggressive nature, their lack of planning, their flexible or inflexible posture, and so on. The tape provides a kind of evidence that isn't available when they just recall the interaction.

- *transcripts*: Giving students a transcript of their collaborative planning (or having them transcribe sections of it themselves) provides a text that can be carefully analyzed. Students can often discern patterns in their own interaction.Thinking about, listening to, and reading transcripts of their own collaborative planning helps supporters determine whether they are merely passively present or helping the writer develop his/her own plan or consistently telling the writer what to do. Writers are able to see how they develop a plan--whether they focus on content rather than on rhetorical elements, whether they are resistant or receptive to new ideas.

ADAPTING COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Some teachers have modified collaborative planning for specialized uses. For example, a social studies teacher used collaborative planning as a way to get his students to attend consistently to authorial purpose--their own and that of the historical documents they read in the course. In another situation, an English teacher had her students use collaborative planning to investigate the possible audiences of essays they were reading in class and then to consider appropriate audiences for their own essays.

Just as teachers can use collaborative planning for specialized purposes, it can also be used to spot students who are not successfully in their planning. If the collaborative planning sessions have been taped, the teacher can listen to the tapes. With information from such observations, a teacher can suggest ways the students can improve their process and, thus, their products. This information can also help a teacher select areas to focus on for future class instruction. A teacher can accomplish a similar goal, though generally with fewer students, by listening to collaborative planning sessions as they happen and taking notes about the nature of the interaction. These observations can also be used to focus on one area, for example, to determine how frequently students are considering a particular rhetorical element such as audience or the conventions of document design.

SUPPLEMENT: EXAMPLES OF PLANNING

This supplemental section gives you the opportunity to learn more about the nature of plans and planning and to examine a variety of examples of collaborative and individual planning.

One way to learn more about the thinking processes writers use is to have them think aloud, saying everything that goes through their minds as they plan and write. This thinking aloud, called a *protocol*, acts as a window through which to observe the writer's thinking process. The think aloud protocol is tape recorded, and sometimes transcribed, for later analysis.

The examples in this section are excerpts from planning protocols. A plan is a condensed mental version of things writers want **to say** in a paper (the topic information--words, phrases, sentences, ideas) and of things they want **to do** (the decisions about purpose, audience, and text conventions). That is, writing, like speaking face-to-face, is a rhetorical act. A plan **to do** something is a set of goals that set up how writers are planning to affect the reader, the angle they decide to take, the key point they want to get across, or the text conventions they might use to achieve their purpose.

If you present this material to your classes, you might find it useful to include some of the following comments, which are addressed to students.

> Imagine yourself as a planner with a number of mental blackboards on which you could post useful information, new goals, and tentative plans as you go along, *whenever* these ideas come to you. Each blackboard specializes in certain kinds of plans and goals.
>
> Some writers think only about making plans for what they want to say and spend all their time generating ideas and sentences *for the text*. This

means that they post lots of information on the topic information blackboard, but neglect the other parts of their plan.

More experienced writers create more complex plans. As they go along, they use their mental blackboards to post a steady stream of tentative goals, good ideas, and possible plans that help define what they want to do by writing. That is, they think about their purpose and key point, about their audience, and about different conventions and patterns of text they might use.

EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

In this section, you'll read excerpts from the transcribed protocols of three Collaborative Planning sessions, all of which show students working at the same class assignment.

Assignment: Read a chapter in *Word Play* about differences and the barriers between different "speech communities"--people who use words differently. *Apply this to a problem* in speaking and writing "academic discourse." Use the blackboard planning strategies when you meet with your collaborator.

The students were also instructed to use the same strategies they had learned about Collaborative Planning and to use the Planner's Blackboard to prompt them. The students individually taped a self-interview about their plans and then taped their Collaborative Planning sessions. Each example gives a little background about the student writers. Notice how the students use their mental blackboards to help them organize their thinking and to plan their papers. The **boldface** type represents key ideas that a writer posts on mental blackboards. The *italic* type represents text the writer generates.

Example 1: Tanya Finds She Has Something To Say.

Mary is a confident student; Tanya is not and has trouble getting assignments done. They are close friends. This transcript shows how Mary elicits strengths and ideas Tanya didn't know she had at the same time it asks for more sophisticated planning.

From Tanya's Self-Interview

My **audience**, I guess would be Professor Flower, and I . . . She expects a little bit more than this, but I feel as if I'm regurgitating what I've already said about academic discourse. . . .

And my **text conventions** would be almost like a commentary. . . I guess like . . . What I think is a problem. Maybe it was my own problem. Maybe it still is my problem. But. . . So it would be like a commentary. More . . . This is something that happens. Not really solving it.

From the Collaborative Planning Session

Mary: What kind of conclusions -------? Let's talk about -- Let's talk about what kind of **text conventions** are you're going to -------?

Tanya: For this paper?

Mary: Yeah.

Tanya: I think that because I don't really. . . I'm not really being clear, that I would write sort of a commentary, not drawing basic conclusions. That's something that's like really strong conclusions, but . . .

Mary: So you won't have an introduction ----------?

Tanya: So I won't have the introduction leading into my next paragraph. My next paragraph finally heading towards my conclusions, saying "This is what I said, this is what I mean, and I feel that this. . . And in conclusion. . . This is this."

Mary: More like a response statement.

Tanya: Yeah. More like, "This is what I'm thinking, and I think it can be applied to this, but I'm not really sure if that's a valid. . . If that can really be said. Or. . . Because it's sort of just an idea that I have.

Mary: So your **purpose** is to explore what. . . ?

Tanya: To explore. . .

Mary: Queer word.

Tanya: To explore. . . In the words of Jacques Cousteau. . . To explore new depths, conquer new heights. . .

Mary: All right, so we have what your purpose is. You want to . .

Tanya: Not really. . . Not really be definitive. . . Not really have a. . .

Mary: But you do have a point.

Tanya: I have a point but I can't be conclusive.

Mary: Why?

Tanya: Because I can't really find anything from Farb [the assigned reading] to apply to "academic discourse," [the assigned topic] except maybe for the [problem of] translating, and that's not even like a parallel. It's sort of just . . . Well, there's just one little point in there that I think that I could use to apply. So I'm sort of trying to find something, and I'm really -----.

Mary: Okay. Let's. . . Why don't you think about the **audience**. Like, what do your think that Linda Flower in reading this is trying to find out. What is she going to get from it. From you, Tanya, reading. . .

Tanya: From what I've been saying in this paper?

Mary: Yeah.

Tanya: I never considered her trying to get something.

Mary: See. That's the thing, She really does. She really feels that she can learn something. What can you tell her. . . If you were really speaking to her. . . Maybe you should include something from your own experience.

Tanya: I was thinking of that. I was thinking since I don't really have a conclusion, that I could only give really examples. . . . Maybe *I was having a problem*, in fact, with the translating and learning of the new discourse. So I would have to use that as an example, my own experiences. Maybe to show her that this is not just something that I'm just pulling out of the air. And that it's something actually that I feel is prevalent. So maybe if I feel. . . If I've experienced it, then there has to be some truth in it.

Mary: Yes. Hm-m.

Example 2: The Supporter Who Asks for More

Joe and Ted are both freshmen. Joe is writing about how people use conventional filler phrases, such as "Hi. How are you?" Ted seems to want more than Joe is giving him. Although Joe remains reluctant to give himself a harder task, we see a situation in which a peer (not a teacher) is giving the writer clear feedback that he as a reader finds the writer's text unsatisfying and why.

Joe: Let me see. What should we cover next? Well, **key point.**

Ted: Yeah. What is your key point?

Joe: Well, it's just to discuss how this [conventional phrases] comes up in life, and how people use it to avoid like say. . .

Ted: Are you going to be saying, "This is good, this is bad." What are you gonna be saying?

Joe: Well, I'm just. . . I'm not gonna be saying. . . I'm not gonna be making any kind of judgment. I'm gonna like discuss it. Really, I think the paper's gonna be a little too short to be into making judgments. . .

Ted: I don't know. It doesn't seem like much of a point to me. It doesn't sound like you're making a point.

Joe: Well, I'm just discussing something. Well, it's my -- That's my purpose to discuss this.

Ted: Okay, Okay, Sure.

Joe: All right?

Ted: Sure.

Later. . . .

Ted: What would you conclude? I mean, you. I haven't seen any conclusion you'd come to.

Joe: Well, I know. That's why we're talking about it. See, you're supposed to help me, Ted.

Ted: Well, I'm just. . .

Joe: Oh no.

Ted: I was thinking if you had a more definite key point - maybe you could have a more definite conclusion.

Joe: Well, yeah. Ah. . . I mean, I - I do. . . In my mind, see, I have a key point. I know - I know what I want to discuss.

Ted: There's a difference between having it in your mind and on the paper.

Joe: Yeah. A whole grade difference. (Laughs)

Later. . .

Ted: So what I get from this is that. . . that you're just gonna go over certain examples that's all the paper is gonna be. . .

Joe: Yeah.

Example 3: Rejected Suggestions Trigger an Idea

Jennie and Bill are freshmen. Jennie's thesis has been that language and memory prevent people from faithfully reconstructing past experience, even when they think they are simply telling "what happened." At this point Jennie's plan is "just to tell about it." In responding to (rejecting) Bill's suggestions, Jennie comes up with a new plan and a new audience. Here the process of collaboration itself, rather than any advice the partner gives, appears to be a catalyst for new ideas and change.

Bill: You're gonna have a definite conclusion. So, what are your gonna try to do in this conclusion? Are you gonna try to have a solution?

Jennie: Umm...

Bill: Or what?

Jennie: No. See, I don't really think there is a solution to this problem. Well, I guess. . . In a way there is a solution if people are aware of what

they do they can try to stop it [i.e., misrepresenting the past] . But I don't think that's really practical. I think I'm just gonna tell about it. And alert the listeners to past experiences, that they may not be hearing exactly what happened. I really don't think that there is a solution to that.

Bill: So, you're gonna try to give maybe ideas or whatever to maybe help communicate the past better?

Jennie: Um . . . . no.

Bill: Give helpful hints of something?

Jennie: I don't know. Do you think that would be a good idea?

Bill: I don't. . . Maybe. If you like.

Jennie: 'Cause is there really a solution to that problem?

Bill: Well, give a general idea. . . Or maybe give a general idea of how you can express yourself. Well, I guess that. . .

Jennie: I think I was gonna. . .

Bill: That'd be too hard.

Jennie: I think I was directing this more to the listener. . .

Bill: Hm-hm.

Jennie: . . .a person hearing past events rather than the speaker of them. And I'm trying to let the listerner be aware of this so they can be more alert, and ask more questions, and just probe to get the true story. Because if you tell this to the speaker, . . he might say,"Oh yeah, . . yeah" and just tell the story anyways. But you tell it to the listener . . . they'll be, you know more aware, and try to get the true story.

Bill: So basically, you're gonna tell a. . . well, not exactly tell them, but kind of help them to get the most out of what people are telling them. . . or . .

Jennie: Uh-huh.

Bill: Or just kind of giving them an idea of what to expect when somebody's telling them a story. . .

Jennie: Yeah. Let them. . . Let them know the pitfalls involved.

At the end of the session . . .

Jennie: Well, thanks, Bill. Um. Well, I really do want to thank you because you helped me with my conclusion. Before, like I knew I was gonna have a concluding paragraph, but I didn't really. . . (laughs). That sounds so stupid, I know. But. . . And you always gotta have one.

But I didn't really know what to put in it. And when you said, "Are you gonna have tips for the speaker, so he would -um- know how to, you know correct for himself. . ." I was thinking. . . hm. . . Is that the approach I want to use, or would I rather direct it more to the listener. And I decided that I think the listener would be better. And, you know, that's really great that you brought that point up.

EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

If you want to learn more about the nature of planning, this section provides excerpts from transcribed protocols that illustrate how blackboards can be used to track they ways students organized their thinking and planned their papers. The following excerpts come from the think aloud protocols of students working on an assignment to read about a series of articles about time management and then write a statement synthesizing the relevant but sometimes conflicting information from their reading. The **boldface** type represents key ideas that a writer posts on mental blackboards. The *italic* type represents text the writer generates.

Focusing on Purpose: Getting an Angle

The following excerpts from the talk aloud protocol of a student writer show how she uses thinking about her purpose as a way to deal with the problem of focusing her paper.

- [The writer has just drafted a paragraph on the commonplace "*there are different theories about time management.*" She looks at her work and says. . .] "Garbage! Well, this is not enough. I have to write some more."

- Ok, **so what? What do I think** about this? Time management. What do I know about time management . . ."

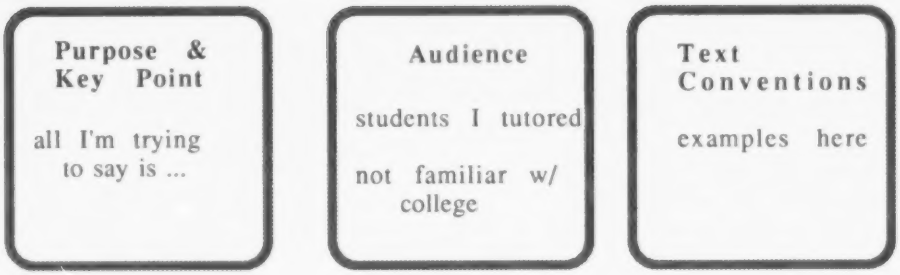
- *"The key* --nah -- I wish I could get an **angle** on this. How am I going to do this? **Why** do I want to do this. **What good** will it do me. Time Management? -- *Time Management. What good will it do me ? -- How can I time manage*. No. How am I going to do this? What good, will it do for me?" [And then flipping back to the assignment, she says to herself . . .] "**My opinion**. So why not , like it says, why not write down my statement, based on my interpretation of this data."

Focusing on the Reader

This writer focuses on the audience but also moves back and forth between the purpose and text conventions blackboards, using ideas from one to generate ideas in others. The blackboard that follows shows how the writer's comments are distributed.

- *"My statement of this*. It's easier for me to write something knowing who I'm writing to. So I'm goimg to assume that I'm writing this for **students like I used to tutor**. Ok, **freshmen who aren't familiar with college need to know** what to do first . How to **prioritize their tasks and fit them into time slots. That's really all I'm trying to say**."

- " No one's going to understand what this means **if they're a new student**, so I really need to give **examples** at this point."



Focusing on Text Conventions: Text Features as Tricks of the Trade

This writer realizes that some of her assumptions about the text conventions she might use are stalling her attempt to plan. The following excerpts from her think aloud protocol show that she begins to realize that she can change the text conventions.

- "First paragraph, that's my **introduction**. Now I could either go back and make some **general statements** about what time management experts say and **sum that up** by saying that time management is obviously a personal thing, since they don't have the same way of doing it. Or I could say it is a personal thing and **go into the personal approaches.** I guess I'll do that; that would be better."

- "I'm going to write out a bit of an **outline**. OK, we'll use the last paragraph here as sort of a **problem statement**, where it says *Time management has been the subject of extensive research* and so on. Well, **why**? Why is it **important**? **Who cares**? Why is it an **issue**? OK, I'll use the last paragraph as the problem statement."

- "OK, I just walked away and screamed 'I can't do this' because it's driving me crazy."

- "I want to introduce scheduling. . . . Why do I have to stick with that **old form** that says 'say everything in the **introduction**'? Who cares? You don't have to do it that way. OK, if I don't have to do it that way, why don't I just give my reaction to what I read?"

Focusing on Making Connections: Putting Things Together

This writer goes from a sense of his key point to thinking about the text conventions of organization that would support his idea.

- [Right after 2nd reading] "Ok, how am I going to organize this into a paper? What have we got? We've got preparation is the key to performance with Jean. We've got the students' survey. We've got Alan talking about planning as decision making. We've got William's mental fatigue that's set against Jean. Ok, play these two off against each other. Ok, we've got

Walter with a Cornell study. [pause] It appears that all of these apply to academic performance. **Why don't we make that the major focus: what you have to do to succeed academically?"**

- [Later] "Ok, I think I can **organize this as a how to study thing**, and maybe go **chronologically** through , humm, the concepts. Ok, so the **introduction** could, . . we'll start off with what students actually do."

Focusing on Making Links

Planning can lead to lots of information on different blackboards. What happens to those good ideas and tentative goals? Sometimes writers simply forget them: they don't monitor their mental blackboards; they may not even notice that they have plans that contradict one another. However, one of the key strategies experienced writers use is to be very pragmatic about making ideas work for them. Try this: when you come up with a new idea, pause, **review**, and ask yourself, "How is this idea **linked to my text**? What should I do as a result of this idea? How does it change my text?"

A second strategy, which experienced writers use (and less experienced writers usually don't), is to **review** and **create links among parts of the plan.** The writers may conduct a mental review of their goals and progress ("Where was I going? How am I doing?"), critique their plans ("Is this really the best way to do this?") and even come up with new goals and plans that consolidate parts of different blackboards.

A good way to look for possible links is to start with an important element in your plan and ask: "How could I connect this to my purpose, to my key point, to what I know about the reader, or the way I see the text?" If you don't have a link in mind, try to make one.

Here are some examples from think aloud protocols of this powerful linking strategy in action. Analyzing these examples for the kind of links writers make raises an interesting question: Which links have the biggest effect? One kind of link writers are concerned about involves deciding on their next move. Writers may ask themselves, "Where do I go from here?" The following excerpts from writers talking aloud shows them trying to resolve this problem.

- [The writer has reviewed his notes on the text and his response to it.] "Unless I just restate a lot of this stuff, talk about the fact that, you know, it

is important, ..., but that's not what they want. They want me to assimilate this, come up with some conclusions, they should be related to something . . ."

- [Rereads assignment, then hits on a new goal.] "I guess I'm gonna have to deal with how, how to attack the problem of Time Management. It sounds good, write this down, and attack problem. Yeah! Great! Things I can think of off hand, you got to put in there about. . . ." [Writer begins to review his notes and search the text .]

- [Later] "I guess I can do a little bit more than restate what they have in the text. I can relate to my situation as a college student. It would be easier to relate to a college student. Well, wonderful."

Another kind of link that concerns writers involves resolving conflicts they notice during their planning. The following excerpts from writers talking aloud show them trying to resolve conflicts they have noticed.

- "This paragraph describing Pauk's findings on study skills seems to be in direct opposition to the analysis by Guitton. Pauk doesn't make any allowance for a calm, relaxed environment. He pushes for a distraction-free environment, which almost sounds like an insane asylum cell."

- "I begin to question. . . Pauk says students who schedule as much study time as possible are likely to be better students. I think scheduling all that time is going to be as much pressure as all your required obligations. Obviously Guitton's findings seem more humane to me. He suggests, take it easy and stop if you find your concentration dropping. He espouses a right, not a distraction free, but a 'right' environment. Calm but stimulating. He values things like music and white noise."

- "Maybe the second part of my little paper would not be on concentration [as previously planned], but would be on the debate between two streams of thought concerning the ability to concentrate. . . ."

- "I guess I could still make concentration my main heading. . . . So then first, I'll define will power, and the second thing I would do is compare and contrast Guitton and Pauk on what is the best environment for encouraging concentation."

Reviewing and linking are clearly an expert planning move. In order to use this strategy, the writer has to solve two problems: (1) Keep track of all the ideas on the blackboard--to remember earlier goals. And (2) remember to review, link, and consolidate at key points in the writing process. Notice how you handle these two problems when you use these linking strategies.

III. INITIATING COLLABORATIVE PLANNING: SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR DESIGNING A CLASS

This section of the project book suggests ways you can use Collaborative Planning with your students. The section discusses ways to use Collaborative Planning in your own classes. The section then introduces ways to teach Collaborative Planning, recommending a three-class series--planning, collaborating, and reflecting--and suggesting both classroom demonstrations and issues for discussion, which are signaled by the following icons:

- Classroom demonstrations
- Issues for discussion

This section also contains a discussion of reflection as a way to aid students to become more aware of their own thinking and of their options as problem solvers. This discussion suggests specific ways for individuals to observe and reflect on their own thinking and planning processes.

USING COLLABORATIVE PLANNING IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Collaborative Planning is a flexible technique that can be used in many different ways, for many different purposes in a variety of school and community settings. The uses suggested in here are based on the collective experiences of teachers who have used Collaborative Planning with students in fifth grade enrichment classes, high school English and social studies classes, college classes in business, professional, and technical communication, and of group leaders working with young adults in a community literacy center.

Teachers have found Collaborative Planning to be useful for both the planning and the revising their students do. During students' planning, Collaborative Planning helps them focus their ideas and consider rhetorical elements such as purpose, audience, and text conventions. During students' revision, Collaborative Planning helps them re-examine how they've addressed these rhetorical elements. Teachers often use Collaborative Planning to complement, rather than replace, other planning and revising strategies such as peer response groups and paired editing. Teachers have found that Collaborative Planning is adaptable, being useful with both pairs and small groups of student writers and their supporters.

During the pilot year, students used Collaborative Planning for a variety of assignments, including character sketches, narratives, analytical essays on literary

subjects, proposals, research papers, and analytical reports on technical subjects. Generally, students have reported that Collaborative Planning makes their work easier, improves its quality, and increases their reflection about both their process and the product.

TEACHING COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

We have found it helps to devote three classes to teaching Collaborative Planning. The first introduces students to the concept of plans that include concerns beyond getting things to say. This class allows students to get involved in generating alternatives and making a rich and well-developed plan. The second class helps them see how to become an effective collaborator, which includes learning to listen and elicit ideas. Modeling "how to" collaborate helps students see the distinction between collaborative planning and an ordinary bull session and lets students have some necessary practice. The third class devoted to reflections is the essential step that lets students turn this experience into new knowledge and lets you, the teacher, learn about problems, assumptions, questions, and successes you might otherwise never see.

In the remainder of this section of the project book, our suggestions for the class are written as we would speak to students, with occassional asides to the teacher presented in brackets and smaller type. Where possible we have tried to suggest activities, issues for discussion, or demonstrations that have worked for us, instead of information to lecture on.

The Planning Class

This first class focuses on planning. The purpose of this class is to look at what happens when writers plan and to see how writers working with the same theme can produce radically different plans. Have you ever noticed how two musicians can start with the same theme, but transpose it to a different key, use different instruments, and create different melodies and backup around that theme to produce entirely different compositions? In the same way writers, even when they are working on assigned topics or themes, create their own purpose and supporting plans and goals; they plan around the needs and response of the audience as they imagine it, and they must decide which patterns and conventions of written text they want to use. Each plan, like the combination each musician hears planning a song, is unique.

What goes on when writers plan? Generally, you can expect writers to do three things: (1) represent the task to themselves, (2) build a plan, and (3) consider content, purpose, audience, and text conventions in building their plan. The suggestions in this section are designed to help you develop effective strategies for planning and writing.

1. Writers represent a task to themselves.

- Look at the assignment some college freshmen were given in the Reading-to-Write study (described on pages 78-82 in *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing*, Flower, 1989). What would you have done? Why? What do you think the instructor of the English class you had last year would have expected? What do you think your current instructor would expect and why? Why did people differ so much?

The Reading-to-Write study that is described shows us that even in a supposedly standard assignment like this, writers give themselves very different tasks to do. It also shows us that this is not a simple matter of some representations being right and others being wrong. True, your representation may or may not match your instructor's expectations, but there are many legitimate ways to represent a task. And the writer is the one who builds the representation, even from a "standard" assignment.

2. Writers build a plan.

Writers don't stop with imagining the type of task, any more than a musician stops by deciding to turn his or her theme into a cool jazzy piece with subdued African rhythms. Writers' plans involve a number of ideas and elements--even if writers are not aware of making lots of decisions. The Planner's Blackboard is a way to visualize the four key areas in which writers generate ideas and build plans. [Go over the introduction to the Planner's Blackboard briefly, referring to students' handout of the Planner's Blackboard.] Let's look at some different examples of planning.

- Look at this example of a writer who is thinking out loud as she plans. [Read the text with pace and dramatic intonation. Although the following example does not show Collaborative Planning, it does demonstrate a writer who appears to be stuck in one blackboard and who needs some help. With this and other examples you might put the blackboards up on your own classroom blackboard and ask students to fill in what Help! was doing or just show this version and treat this as a quick example in order to spend time on the plan the class generates.]

An Example from a Writer Thinking Aloud

The following excerpts come from the think aloud protocol of a student working on the assignment to read about time management and writing her own statement that synthesizes the relevant information from her reading. Notice how she uses the planning blackboards. Instead of considering purpose and audience, she focuses her attention on text conventions. Even though she is stuck, she hasn't tried the expert strategy of going back to her purpose or to the key point she wants to make. The following excerpts from her think aloud protocol show that she seems trapped by the limits of her own inadequate plan.

The **boldface** type represents the key ideas that the writer posts on mental blackboards. The *italic* type represents text that the writer generates.

Help! A Writer Who Needs Some Goals

- I'm just going to treat this like a **journal**, I think, and just write a statement. It's not going to be graded, I think. I don't think I have to worry too much about it.

- [Later, after more reading] And so the ones who get things done manage their time wisely, but what do I have to say about it? . . . These readings just don't do anything for me, and I don't even know what I'm supposed to be doing. I feel like such a wuss. What do I do?

- [Later, rereading assignment] So I'm just gonna -- I don't care, I'm going to interpret them the only way I can interpret them. . . . Let's just **put what the authors agreed on**. *Authors agree* - We'll just -- If at least two of them concur, then we'll say they agree. *Authors in general agree that...* But then they don't agree -- There's nothing you can say about this.

- [Later, writes a beginning sentence] *I had a difficult time* ***writing a*** (put it in quotes) *"**comprehensive statement**" about time management because the notes I read didn't help. . .* It's not that they didn't help, 'cause I guess they helped, They didn't write the essay for me, is the problem. *....they did not seem to* ***make a clear statement.***

- [Near the end] Great, I have 5 lines. . . . Send a telegram. Hello. Stop. I don't know what to do! Exclamation. How can I possibly make this into anything? Now I sound like one of the kids in the survey. Yes, I put it off till the last minute. But I did not. It's 12:58 p.m . It's noon time. I'm sitting here thinking about rehersal tonight. I'm sitting here thinking about anything but -- That's not true. I'm thinking about time management. And I'm thinking that I'm not doing well, but I don't know why.

When her comments are summarized on the Planner's Blackboard in Figure 3, it's easy to see how she ignores purpose and audience. The Planner's Blackboard could help this writer by acting as a prompt, a reminder, to consider other important aspects of planning.

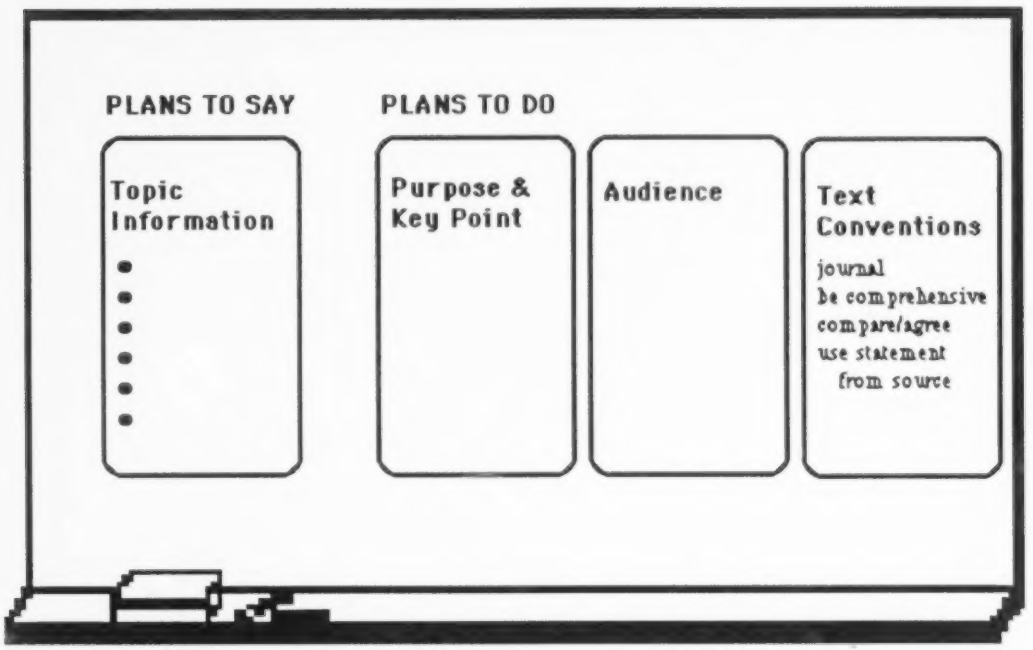


Figure 3: Planner's Blackboard for Help! Writer

[Optional] Notice how the Help! writer was concentrating her attention on Text Conventions. Compare this to the way writers in the other examples are building up their plans. [In general, generating plans in class is more effective than reading them aloud, but people do need to see examples of a more elaborated plan and of what subgoals and text plans look like.]

3. Expert writers build plans in all four areas.

Make a Prediction. People have studied the kind of thinking that experienced and inexperienced writers do when they plan. This planning may be done in the shower, walking to work or home from class, or in the midst of writing. It includes all the goals and ideas writers have for the paper. What do you predict would be some of the major differences between the experts and novices ? [Write predictions on the board. See how many people agree with each prediction, before looking at what the researchers have seen.]

During this class discussion, consider bringing up the following points that identify key differences between inexperienced and experienced writers. (Did you predict any of these?)

- Novices spend far less time planning before they write. For in-class assignments, you can measure planning time in seconds sometimes.

- Novices put all of their attention into generating topic information and ignore the other blackboards. They concentrate on "knowledge telling" more than on trying to persuade a reader or helping a reader understand. [Do you have any ideas why students might have developed this strategy in doing writing for school?]

- Novice writers often express their purpose in one word and stop (e.g., "I intend to persuade people that xxx is true."). Experienced writers think up many more supporting plans and goals for how to persuade and why they are doing that. Their image of purpose has many more goals and reasons in it.

- Novice writers often name their audience and stop ("My reader is going to be students who..."). Experienced writers fill their mental blackboard with predictions and guesses about what the reader needs and how the reader will respond to the writer's ideas, goals, or way of presenting things in text.

- Experienced writers often stop to review their plan and they build far more links between parts of the plan.

- Finally, novice writers often come up with good ideas that never see the light of text. Experienced writers regularly pause and ask themselves: How can I turn that idea into text?

The best way to imagine what a more elaborate and more linked expert plan might look like is to build one ourselves and use the Planner's Blackboard to visualize some of the features of our plan.

Problem #1. Writing for Students

I have a problem. I have been asked to give a presentation to incoming students on the problem of time management, since it is an important issue when you enter a new school. I will give it orally and a written version will go in the Students' Handbook. Since you are much closer to this problem than I am, would you work as consultants for me and help me draft a plan, using some of the material from the readings on time management. I will write ideas on the board. Where do you think we should begin?

[Have large boxes drawn on the board so you can show what Blackboards are being used and what ones are still empty. Keep Topic Information over to one side to emphasize the other Blackboards. Or cluster notes as class talks and add Blackboard borders later to reveal different kinds of plans they made. Writing notes in boxes should not appear to be the way you want students to plan.]

Ask some of the following questions of planners if these issues don't come up:

- What do you think I should try to accomplish: What goals make sense--changing habits, raising awareness, teaching new strategies, alerting to danger signals that time management is your problem? What goals should I set and why?

- Ok, you want me to [goals]_____. How in the world am I going to do that! Give me some supporting goals. Are there any other ways I could do that?

- You planned that I should ____. How will students respond? If they have that response, what should I plan to do over here (in purpose or text conventions)? [Note the link student writers can make.]

- Do I have any options about how this could look or be presented orally: What text conventions could I use (Joke beginning? Handouts? Lists? Raise a problem? Dramatize? Compare "before" and "after"?)?

- Have you made many links between plans for me?

- That's a great idea/observation. How can I translate that idea into text? How might I change my plan?

- [In taking notes: Keep moving back and forth between blackboards, and note how one idea stimulates ideas in another blackboard. Also after a bit, keep asking writers to review the plan and see if they see any links. Draw the links and name them. You have the right to express high anxiety if the plan isn't developed enough for you to use it.]

- REVIEW: What did we do? Did we look like experienced writers? What is the strongest part of our plan? Where do we need to work more?

Problem 2. The Academic Paper

[This assignment or one like it prepares students to try out Collaborative Planning in an upcoming class by having a plan to work with. It also faces the fact that academic papers may seem harder to plan than the "time management" talk you may have planned in class.]

Sometimes it is actually easier to build a plan for a rhetorical or persuasive assignment like this than it is for a standard academic paper. What if you were asked to plan a paper that asked you to "Analyze the readings on time management you have here and write a paper that applied those readings to the situation of incoming students in your school. Your primary reader is the instructor who is interested in how you explore this issue."

How do you represent this assignment to yourself? What do you think your reader is expecting ? How would you see your purpose and your how-to goals now? What do you need to do for that reader? And what text conventions do you need to use; what options and techniques could you use?

Sometimes the best way to think through a problem like this (and to develop a more elaborated plan with how-to subgoals and how-to-do-it-in-writing text plans) is to use Collaborative Planning. Before next class, sit down and spend around 15 minutes developing a plan with as many

ideas, options and even alternative plans as you can. (Jot down some notes about your plan.) Since this is an academic paper, you may want to consider things such as: what does it mean to "analyze" and to "apply"? What are you going to do with the fact that your sources contradict each other? How are you going to add your own perspective--in the organizing idea or just in comments at the end?

In the next class we will try out the technique of Collaborative Planning. Be ready to talk over your plan with your partner. Then we will see how our plans compare with each other.

The Collaboration Class

[Show a tape on Collaborative Planning if available. The goal of this class is to model what good collaboration looks like, both in terms of thoughtful planning and questioning by the planner and careful listening and encouragement by the supporter. It helps to point out and name effective moves in the process as students are doing it.]

- Do you ever do Collaborative Planning in informal ways (roommate, parents, friend? What form does it take then. What is it good for; why do you do it?

[Go over roles of the planner and supporter, referring students to their handout.]

- Try it Out Together (10 minutes)

I will be the first volunteer. Give me a topic to plan on (make it up), and I will plan out loud . I get to pick my supporter. [Pick one, then change.] Who wants to be the next planner and talk out your time management plan? You get to pick your supporter.

What did you notice going on? What helped you most? [Review roles of planner and supporter.]

- Try it Out on Your Own

Now find a partner (or group of three if uneven) and try explaining your plan to your supporter. Supporter, listen for where the plan is strong, where it might be developed. Look at the advice for supporters on your introduction sheet if it will help. After 10 minutes, we will switch roles.

REVIEW: What happened? This was your first time with this strategy. What did you notice about your session? Where were the plans the strongest? Where were they underdeveloped? Did you come up with the same plan? Did you have the same purpose?

[At this point, assign students to hold a Collaborative Planning session on a paper that you have just assigned. Tell them how to prepare for the reflection class to come.]

The Reflection Class

[This is the class that lets you see and lets students consolidate what they have learned. It also appears to be critical to the success of this experience for some students to have the opportunity to discuss problems, especially ways they made their planning sessions too rigid and formulaic. This discussion lets them see they are responsible for using planning in a way that actually works for them. But most importantly, this class is a way to demonstrate the value of reflection and of becoming more aware of your own thinking.]

Collaborative Planning gives you a new window on what goes on when you plan. I asked you to make a tape of your session and then to write a short Observation and Response statement because reflecting on your own process may reveal far more than simply reading about planning.

Let's start out simply sharing the "interesting thing" you observed about your planning. It could be about how the session worked (and how it differed from the class exercise), about what was hard or easy, productive or not, or about what you discovered about your paper or your own planning or expectations or how you differ from your partner. Whatever was interesting to you.

[Try to get each person to have the floor. Or if the class is large, select five people to present this time, and a small group of people to respond to them, comparing their own experience or asking questions.]

The following issues may be raised by students. Consider the suggested responses as possible ways to respond to these student concerns.

- I found that collaborating, using the Planner's Blackboard, explaining my plan, etc., was unnatural and uncomfortable. It didn't help.

Response: This is important information. How did you design the planning session? What happened that made it unhelpful? Second, did you have to manage it or set it up in that way? Could you design it to work differently? *What do you plan to do differently next time to make this 15 minutes work for you*?

- I already knew what I wanted to say and I didn't want to change it, even if my supporter had a point.

Response: That is a reasonable response. But what is the real problem: You held the session too late to use it well. Or the changes weren't really necessary, so you just learned someting about options that you decided not to use (that's fine to do). Or the changes really would have made an improvement, but you don't like to revise even when you need to?

You might stimulate student thinking and class discussion by bringing up the following points:

- How did you decide to use the Planner's Blackboard this time? Did you use it in a formal way to help come up with and organize ideas, or in an informal way to test where your plan was inadequate. Did your supporter use the blackboard categories?

- Did you come up with a skimpy or well-developed plan with some elaborated goals, reader responses, and text plans? Did you look like the expert planners in some places? Looking back at your tape, where were you concentrating your attention this time?

- What makes a good supporter? What should we add to our list to help supporters help planners?

- When you switched roles, what did you notice about your partner's plan or way of planning? How did his or her way of planning differ from yours?

REFLECTING ON ONE'S OWN STRATEGIES

How can students reflect on their own thinking and become more aware of themselves as problem-solvers and as people with options? The first step is to have a *record of your thinking to look at*--to have something concrete to reflect upon. The second step is to have a *reason to reflect and a way to do it.* Here is a preliminary tool kit of ways to observe and reflect.

How to Observe Your Own Planning Process

1. Make a tape.

Bring two tape recorders and two tapes to your Collaborative Planning session, so each person will have their own tape of themselves as a planner and a supporter.

"Cue up" the tape by recording your name, the date and the paper you are discussing. Then play it back to see if everything is recording. Turn the tape onto RECORD as soon as you begin (the informal talk at the beginning and end may be one of the best parts of your planning). Leave it on until you are done! Ignore the tape. But be sure to write your name and the date on the outside so you won't erase anything.

2. Make a "home movie" video tape.

An even more revealing way to observe planning is to see it live on a rough, unedited piece of video tape. To turn it into a "performance," use just a home video camera as a silent recorder. You will look wonderful on tape, and it gives you an even clearer idea of what happens whan you plan.

Later, when you have time to review either tape, take some notes on what you hear (notice its location on the counter) and on what interests or surprises you. Or

listen to it with a specific question in mind (e.g., did my purpose change or develop at all?).

3. Take notes during and right after a planning session.

This is clearly a "second best" way to observe, because you are more likely to notice things you already expect to see and already have a name for. But you can still learn valuable things if you take notes and/or talk the process over with your partner right after you plan.

Ways to Reflect on a Thinking Process

1. The "Interesting Feature" Assignment.

Ask students to make an audio tape of their planning, to listen to that tape and come up with one "interesting feature" of their own process. (It could be"interesting" to them alone or to others.) Ask them to find an example or a way to document this interesting feature in their record. And then ask everyone in class to talk for five minutes on the interesting feature they found and to use their example from the recording to describe what happened.

The "interesting feature" assignment makes everyone important and interesting and it can turn up real differences in what students do as well as strategies, problems, and ideas they had in common but thought were unique. Here are some comments from the presentations of freshman doing the "time management" essay.

Since I was talking out loud, I was very conscious of the fact that I was making connections to what everyone was saying. Using my own--using things that have happened to me to connect to what everyone [in the assigned reading] was saying. . . . And I realized that I actually do have strategies to read, I thought I didn't. I thought I was some kind of odd person who didn't have any strategies ever. . . .

What I wasn't used to was interjecting my own feelings about the assignments as I went along. And when I think back on that, the fact that I stopped and responded to what the author had just said. . . . that is really want kept the paper going and what gave me a lot of ideas. . . . And that was a new experience for me.

2. Explore some "interesting features" of planning from the uncut video tape of some collaborative sessions.

When teachers using Collaborative Planning made video tapes with their classes, they found that some of the best learning went on when students were looking at the rough cuts of their planning in small groups, trying to decide what to keep for the final video and, in the process, trying to describe what actually happened in their planning. These tapes are a good basis for class discussion. Looking at an uncut video may be a good way to introduce students to thinking about their thinking, as a prologue to just using an audio tape.

3. Use a collaborative planning "trio."

Add a third person to the planning team whose job is to observe what happens: to take a few notes--make a record of some sort--and to then contribute to a

reflection on the strategies each partner used. This member could listen for the blackboard categories, or listen with specific questions in mind.

4. Write a personal reflection or discovery paper.

Once students have done Collaborative Planning a few times and have 2 or 3 records of their own thinking to look at and have begun to think about their own problems, strengths, and insights, ask them to write about what they have discovered.

If you know another class that is doing reflection at the same time, swap papers. Distribute papers so each paper from class #1 is read by two or three people and visa versa. Focus on insights and response as a reader, not peer editing. Then do a "home movie" video of the class discussion in each class. Swap videos.

5. Make a video letter from your class to another class.

This method of reflection celebrates the fact that every class or group of students has some distinctive strategies and distinctive kinds of writing tasks. Ask students to tape some short video segments of people actually planning and then decide what to send to writers in another class A 10-minute video letter from your class to other students lets your students look at their own rough cut video tape, decide what short segments are meaningful and why, and write a brief video commentary they can speak right on the tape about what they observed. The more informal this is the better. (They might also create a written document about themselves and their writing to go with the video letter.)

6. Become a researcher.

Ask your students to become researchers with you as a way to give focus and a purpose to their reflections. Students can look at their Collabortive Planning to discover some of the variations in how students plan or to answer some interesting question about the planning strategies they use. Being a researcher also gives them an opportunity to compare their observations and reflections with those of other observers.

Do some close observation. One way to be a researcher is to start with close observation. Use some technique that lets students collect specific, detailed observations, such as Fanselow's conversation moves, or Flander's interactions, or the Blackboards, or some scheme you devise. Ask students to observe (collect examples, count, tally), and then to look for a pattern, and finally to reflect on what they saw and what it means. Close observation, as you can see, doesn't give any "answers." It is really a springboard for reflecting on what the behavior or the patterns mean.

Try to answer a question. Another way to use research is to start with a question. A research question such as, "What makes a good supporter?" is a strong way to focus reflection. Students might select the session in which the collaborator helped them the most, and then describe and compare what the supporter did in those "best sessions." Do students agree? Does it depend on what the planner needed?

A more open-ended research question such as "What are the different things supporters do?" would help discover more about the variety of ways collaborators can work among your group of students.

A research question focused on a task, such as "What all does a planner have to think about to do the Dostoevski paper for English class?" or "What to do planning partners contribute to academic papers?" might focus on the special strategies that different groups or different classes use.

IV. CLASSROOM INQUIRY: Answering Questions Through Observation and Reflection

This section focuses on the purpose and nature of classroom inquiry, dealing with the following elements:

- definition of classroom inquiry
- benefits and limitations
- one method of classroom inquiry
- excerpts from discovery papers

WHAT IS CLASSROOM INQUIRY?

Teachers are always designing and redesigning curriculum and methods--to adjust material for specific student needs, to incorporate new information, to try new approaches, to maintain professional vitality. We make decisions about changing our course content and methods based on the research of others or on our own classroom inquiry. Inquiry is stimulated by a problem or question--something we want to know more about. Classroom inquiry is a way to ask questions, get answers, and then use the results to strengthen our teaching. We can also engage our students in classroom inquiry so that they learn not only the course content but also examine and reflect on their own thinking and learning processes.

Educational innovation is most powerful and successful when it comes from the people involved--the teachers and the students. Classroom inquiry can provide the impetus and justification for such innovations, giving teachers organized information to substantiate changes they believe need to be made in curriculum or methodology. Classroom inquiry involves collecting data about the content of the course and the processes and procedures used by the students and teacher. It need not be formal research; instead, it is an investigation by the participants into their activities and processes. It often uses two powerful techniques: observation and reflection.

A teacher who believes that classroom inquiry is one way to improve teaching and increase learning makes a special effort to record the observations we all make as part of our regular teaching. These observations can be recorded using field notes as well as audio and video tapes. The teacher may also collect additional data

from students work in progress or the final product, questionnaires, surveys, interviews, students' written responses to specific questions, and so on.

The reflection is essential, both the students' reflection about their thinking and writing processes and the teacher's reflection about the observations and data. Discussion of these reflections can result in remarkable insights for students and ideas for curriculum changes for the teacher.

BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

Classroom inquiry often results in benefits for both students and teachers. For example, it can generate student enthusiasm about and involvement in their own learning; they become participants rather than recipients and often report on changes in attitudes and effort. Classroom inquiry is also professionally stimulating, giving you your own information on which to base changes you may want to make in curriculum and methods.

However, classroom inquiry does have limitations. It's time consuming, messy, open-ended, and unlike what most of your colleagues are doing. It's time consuming because recording observations and collecting data takes time, and building in opportunities for Collaborative Planning, reflection, and discussion take time. It's open-ended because you don't discover "right" answers; you make observations and collect data from which you can draw concusions.The results are not clean and neat; the observtions and data need to be examined and probed in order to be productive. And finally, your colleagues may wonder why you're wanting to do more work.

But most teachers who engage in classroom inquiry generally agree that the benefits justify their investment of time and effort. Their classes are productive and stimulating, their students are actively involved, and the teachers themselves feel an enthusiasm about teaching that reminds them about their reasons for becoming educators.

ONE METHOD OF CLASSROOM INQUIRY

Using carefully developed questions is a method of conducting classroom inquiry that helps focus and guide teachers as they investigate Collaborative Planning in their own classes.

1. DEVELOP A PROBLEM STATEMENT AND QUESTION

   - Formulate a statement in a sentence or two of the "problem" you have discovered (or anticipate) while initiating Collaborative Planning in the classroom.

   - Develop a question that will help guide your classroom inquiry and provide some answers that may resolve the problem you have defined.

2. DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

   • Design a teaching plan, lesson, assignment, or task that tries to address the problem.

   • Develop a time schedule for executing the action plan.

3. COLLECT OBSERVATION DATA

   • Observe the students as they execute the assignment, task, etc. (The teacher should record classroom observations with field notes, audio or video recordings, etc.).

4. COLLECT REFLECTION DATA

   • Ask students to reflect upon their assignments, tasks, thinking, collaboration, writing, etc., and offer their views.

5. WRITE DISCOVERY MEMO OR OTHER RESPONSE

   • Develop a written response to the question based upon a review of field notes, data collected, etc.

Example of Approach to Classroom Inquiry

Now that you've read about one method of structuring classroom inquiry, you might be interested in reading about how teachers at the Woolslair Elementary Gifted Center describe using this method for their classroom inquiry.

1. IDENTIFYING A PROBLEM STATEMENT AND DEVELOPING QUESTIONS

   • After reviewing our field notes, tapes and discovery memos, we discovered that student supporters in our fifth grade classes tended to adopt the role of an interviewer--racing through our list of prepared questions and prompts--instead of becoming genuinely engaged in the writer's plan for generating ideas for the writing assignment. Therefore, the questions that we now want to focus on are (1) How can we get students to move from interviewing the writer to actively supporting the writer? and (2) What do supporters produce when asked to present (or disclose) the writer's plan to the entire class?

2. DEVELOPING A THREE-WEEK ACTION PLAN

   • Use the Tuesday and Friday afternoon classes.

   • Writing assignment: have students write a paper explaining how they selected their topic and how they whent about doing the research for their major upcoming paper.

   • Explain our questions and the reasons for this task to the students (i.e., representing or explaining the writer's plan to the entire class).

- Introduce the Collaborative Planning and the Planners' Blackboard to the students by using the video play on Collaborative Planning that students made last term.

- Model (or demonstrate) the roles of the writer and supporter, first with teachers playing roles and then with students playing roles.

- Explain the supporter's representation task.

3. COLLECTING OBSERVATION DATA

- Observe the students as they collaborate in pairs on the writing assignment. Each pair of students will be recorded (audio) while they are collaborating.

- Observe the supporters as they represent the writer's plan to the entire class. The supporters' oral representations of their partners' plan will be recorded (audio) while they are addressing the class.

- Teachers will make field notes (either written or recorded) as soon as possible after these sessions.

4. COLLECTING REFLECTION DATA

- Ask the writers to reflect upon their Collaborative Planning session and offer their views about the helpfulness of the supporter. (e.g., What are some of the things the supporter did that you liked?)

- Ask the supporters to reflect upon their Collaborative Planning session and offer their views about the role of the supporter. (e.g., What did you like about being a supporter for _____?)

- The students' reflections about the role of the supporter will be recorded (audio) while they are sharing them with the class.

- The teacher should record his or her reflections (in addition to the field notes) about the action plan, student performance, etc.

5. PREPARING A WRITTEN RESPONSE

- Have the audio recording from both observation and reflection sessions transcribed. Develop a written response to the question based upon a review of all the data collected and submit the article to *Language Arts* for publication.

DISCOVERY PAPERS

Teachers and community center leaders involved in the project have written papers that report and reflect on the observations they have made, focusing on what worked . . . and what didn't work. Teachers included excerpts from the transcribed protocols of their students working together and from students' individual comments about Collaborative Planning.

Excerpts from several discovery papers have been selected to illustrate how different teachers and community center leaders have approached and reported their own inquiry.

Peabody High School
East Liberty
Jane Zachary Gargaro

Jane Zachary Gargaro, English Instructional Team Leader and teacher at Peabody High School, identified a question that interested her enough to investigate. She describes how the objectives for her inquiry evolved from her experiences in teaching:

> I have never been quite satisfied that students heed my comments or even understand them completely. If they did, I would not have to comment so consistently on the same problems. I have also been convinced for quite some time that most high school students do not put the time and effort needed for real improvement into their revisions. They need to know that creativity is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. . . . Would reviewing their own Collaborative Planning sessions help students gain greater understanding of their problem solving abilities and the energy with which they approach a writing task?
>
> In addition to finding out what my students learned about their own process, I hoped to discover more about how Collaborative Planning and the blackboard planner helped my students improve their thinking and planning and how Collaborative Planning can enhance the writing process, for while I readily admit that the Summer Institute in the Teaching of Writing 1984, sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project was the most inspirational of my life, I found the reading response groups to be of little help to me in actually improving my own writing due to the lack of criteria or language for discussing a piece of writing. My group had no common language or experience to enable meaningful commentary. And while I have used peer response groups in my own classroom, I have been perplexed when students feel that any evaluative comment is a negative criticism and a judgment upon them personally . I have struggled with ways to overcome the typical student reaction to a piece of student writing: "I like it just the way it is; don't change a thing."
>
> My objectives for the past semester, therefore, were: (1) to observe what students learned by tracking their own planning process, and (2) to gain additional understanding of the role of Collaborative Planning in the writing process.

Jane's students were involved in three Collaborative Planning sessions during the second semester. In commenting about her students as self-evaluators, Jane draws on their own observations of themselves:

> By tracking their own process and evaluating it, students gained insight into their own process, or lack of process, and noted particular problems in their writing. Several students commented that their process had always been to "get the assignment done." Raya said her style was to "hurry up and finish." In her words, "I am extremely lazy. I have always been able to impress my teachers with a quick load of bull and they always fell for it. I guess that made me feel that I was better than I was or didn't need to strive to improve. I now see that to write something good, you have to work very hard. Collaborative Planning made me see the advantages of planning ahead." Raya has "decided to give myself more time for writing, revising, and editing." I think she is implying that she will devote more time to thinking and problem solving as well. Sherida is another student who did assignments to get them done. In the beginning, she says, she viewed this "Collaborative Planning business as just another assignment." It was not at first a meaningful tool. "When I began to use the Planner's Blackboard as a tool, then I was able to use Collaborative Planning as a tool. I must plan if my supporter is to offer meaningful feedback." Brandon, too, learned the importance of not resisting the process. "It can help you if you let it." He observed that his resistence to the use of a supporter was based on his thinking, "This is my essay, so I'm going to use my ideas, not anyone else's ideas." But Brandon, in reevaluating his position, determined his thinking to be an excuse for not working harder: "Generally speaking, the Collaborative Planning sessions didn't improve my writing skills because I wasn't willing to improve. I wasn't willing to go the extra mile to make my essay 'that'much better." Sherida also recognized that she had been very defensive about her writing. She stated that "Collaborative Planning helped me become more objective and open-minded about my writing." In contrast, Donna recognized that she began to think and experiment more. " I could do different things with my writing if I just took time to think about it." She is recognizing the connection between thinking and planning and text production.

Jane summarizes some of the benefits that Collaborative Planning had in\ helping her students make rhetorical decisions in their planning. She also points out ways in which Collaborative Planning helped her students become more aware of their own writing strategies.

> In addition to analyzing their own thinking as well as their personality traits, students identified necessary rhetorical decisions that they had been ignoring. Sachi learned that she never sifted through her ideas in order to state the main idea. "Now I can state my key purpose and gear my ideas and writing towards conveying the idea. Rachel felt that her writing had always been too abstract. She stated that Collaborative Planning helped "shape my writing." Planning has made her abstractions concrete. Helen observed that she has a hard time settling on an idea to develop; she spends too much time generating ideas and not enough time clarifying them or thinking about techniques she might use to convey them. Perhaps Helen has learned that less is more, in her case, for now. She needs to focus more clearly, identify her key point. Then she can plan strategies to convey that point. Jennifer, too, felt that she learned to narrow the focus and develop her ideas at the same time. She said that a review of the Collaborative Planning sessions taught her that

she did not usually think about the focus of her essay. "I just began to write about a vague, extremely broad topic." She also feels that she has become a more confident writer. Working with a supporter has made her confident that the reader will understand her writing. Genia says that she learned that she must pay more attention to structure and word usage. "Collaborative Planning helped me produce a better first draft."

Jane was interested in how to use Collaborative Planning so that it would help students explode their stereotypes about thinking and writing. This section of her discovery paper discusses creativity and Collaborative Planning, again drawing on students' comments about their own experiences.

Pervading some of my students' papers was the notion that Collaborative Planning is rather like taking a dose of medicine that doesn't taste good but is good for you. Some perceive structure and process as antithetic to creativity. Helen, for example, says that Collaborative Planning did not help her become a "natural creative writer." Rachel, even while admitting that her writing became less abstract through the Collaborative Planning process, still described the process as "rigid and artificial." This is the same student who was able to use this "rigid and artificial" process and restate the key point blackboard to suit her own purposes. With her partner Genia, Rachel began to view the keypoint board as meaning "Did we stay on target?" Thus, this restating of the question became a useful tool in their revision process. Colin, too, felt the process did not help him to be creative. He believes, however, that Collaborative Planning is an excellent tool for providing a focus for revision. Several students noted that Collaborative Planning is an excellent tool to use in research papers, argumentation, and in revision. Helen claims that it helped her produce a more effective argument. "It revealed a side of the argument I totally ignored." It seems to me that what these students are saying is that if they perceive that an assignment requires extended thinking and discipline (argumentation, analysis, research etc.), then a disciplined process is helpful and, therefore, acceptable. But if an assignment is "creative" (a narrative, description, sketch) they would like something which they describe as more "natural" to occur. Perhaps what they desire is something more supernatural to occur, something akin to divine inspiration. This notion of romantic inspiration is felt by Flower and Hayes to lead the writer to self-defeating writing strategies (1). I would add that it might result in having no strategies at all.

Not all of my students felt the stifling effect of Collaborative Planning to their creative efforts, however. Donna indicated that Collaborative Planning "made her experiment with things like point of view and chronological sequence. Raya noted: "Something that I have discovered through Collaborative Planning is the power of description. Placing the right words in the proper order, it is possible to completely capture something." "To capture something" sounds very romantic to me, but Raya is saying that her ability to capture was not the result of inspiration but of planning. Jennifer says that in writing a sketch of her grandmother, she wanted to portray her as brusque but loving. But only with the help of a supporter was she able to pinpoint specific actions of her grandmother which showed her distinctive personality. Her creative sketch took planning and talking about her plan.

The Pittsburgh High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA)
Homewood-Brushton
David Wallace, Center for the Study of Writing, CMU

David Wallace writes about his work with CAPA teachers, summarizing the lengthy discussions about potential problems the teachers anticipated in using Collaborative Planning with their students.

> We were sure that terms like text conventions would make no sense to the students. The teachers wondered whether students would be willing to share ideas for fear that someone would piggyback on their work, and they were also concerned that for many of the expressive/narrative assignments in their curriculum students wouldn't be able to help each other develop their writing plans.

David then describes the action plan they eventually hammered out. He explains how the inquiry for the CAPA students evolved. Because it focuses on case studies, it provides detailed information about the habits and attitudes of two Collaborative Planning pairs.

> When we finally realized that we needed to listen to students, our action plan became quite simple: it involved listening to students before they did Collaborative Planning (initial interviews), during their planning sessions (taping the Collaborative Planning sessions), and after Collaborative Planning (final interviews). In the initial interviews, I asked two strong writers and two average writers (one each from the teachers' 10th and 11th grade classes) a set of questions that focused on their general experiences with writing, where they get their ideas for writing, and the help, if any, that they get from other people with their writing. The two students from the 10th grade class were a particularly interesting pair because their writing processes differed greatly.

David summarizes the key distinctions between the two writers in each Collaborative Planning pair.

> Craig and Amy, two 10th grade students, make an interesting pair for comparison because of the great differences in their writing styles and experiences. Amy uses multiple drafts and heavy social interaction during writing to achieve satisfactory results while Craig's single drafts and almost secretive writing style have earned him good grades in writing. As test cases for Collaborative Planning, Craig brings writing ability but limited social interaction about writing as compared to Amy's extensive interaction and willingness to revise in light of her interaction.

David reports that the initial Collaborative Planning sessions are unproductive for both pairs of students.

> Craig and Ed play the game that the teacher asks them to play, but they are either unable or unwilling to use the session to explore and elaborate their ideas for writing. Much like Amy and Mary, Craig and Ed move through the dittoed questions without stopping to develop their ideas or consider

alternatives. For both groups of writers, rhetorical concepts such as audience remain undeveloped.

However, the situation changes during the second Collaborative Planning session:

Craig and Ed's session is very text-centered. Each student reads the other's text and makes some suggestions. For these two writers, this planning session becomes a peer review session. . . . In contrast, to Craig and Ed's one-sided and text-centered planning session, Amy and Mary work together to develop their plans for writing. Like Craig and Ed, this pair also began by reading each other's texts, but the similarity ends there. In this session, each writer talks at length about her plans for writing, and as supporters, both participants help identify weaknesses in the other's plans. The session focuses mostly on text conventions, although Amy and Mary do not actually use that term.

After Amy discusses what she's trying to accomplish in her paper, Mary summarizes what she sees happening in Amy's paper about the effects that a nova could have on the earth and then offers an opinion about that Amy is planning for her paper. Mary says, "You're speaking in general. I'm talking about you. Okay, I know life would be terminated, but how would you feel. Would you start hallucinating? You personally, this is not talking about the world; this is talking about you." Amy responds that she is not sure that she should spend much time in the paper talking about herself. Then Mary, recalling the teacher's discussion of how to move from general to specific, advises Amy, "Yeah, you can go from general to specific. Remember on the board you can go from a general writing to a specific."

Eventually this discussion leads Amy to a new goal for revision, to make the general part smaller and then "get bigger on the specifics." In this part of the session, Mary helps Amy interpret the teacher's instructions about using general and specific information in terms of Amy's paper. Without ever using the term text conventions, these two writers identify a text structure problem in Amy's paper. Text conventions in a more global sense are also the problem that Amy points out in Mary's paper on the theory of evolution. As Mary discusses what she will say, Amy notices that Mary is planning to turn her paper into an argument, while Mary maintains that she is still writing an extended definition. At one point, Amy says, "Oh, well, is this going to be like an argument? You're going to say..." Mary interrupts, "It's still going to be the extended definition of evolution. And going along with the definition of evolution, going along with stating the other species are involved with the evolution theory."

As the session continues, it becomes clear to Amy that Mary is missing the point of the assignment. She stresses to Mary again that Mary is trying to argue a point and that she will have to cite a great deal of evidence to make her point. Finally, Amy suggests, "You know I think it would be, if you just write the standard definition of evolution...It seems to me that would be like a whole different subject when you argue it." Mary finally sees Amy's point and the two proceed to compare their papers and find a way for Mary to restructure what she has already written. . . .

In his concluding remarks, David notes that doing these case studies was a productive kind of inquiry, but he also builds in several caveats.

> I learned a great deal about Collaborative Planning by listening to these students tell me about their writing processes, pouring over the transcripts of their planning sessions, and talking with them about what went on as they worked with a partner to plan their writing. However, I also have to be careful about generalizing the experiences of these two students to all students trying Collaborative Planning for the first time.
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> Given that caveat, I'd like to risk one generalization and then suggest some reasons for why Collaborative Planning didn't work for Craig and Ed but Amy and Mary had a productive second planning session. The experiences of these students in their planning sessions convinces me that for Collaborative Planning to work, students must take charge. In terms of these writers that meant that first they had to see the sessions as something that could help them and not as something which the teacher wanted them to do. But it also meant that the writers needed to see that success in planning depends on their willingness and ability to apply the rhetorical prompts in the collaborative planner to the specific needs and situation of a writer.
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> Collaborative Planning seems bound to fail if it consists of perfunctory answers to a teachers checklist of questions. In our research group's concern to make the rhetorical prompts of Collaborative Planning concrete for students, we overlooked a more basic issue. We didn't explain to students that cCollaborative Planning would not work unless they took charge. Thus, the one recommendation that I will venture based on what we learned is that instruction about Collaborative Planning needs to stress students' control and responsibility in making the planning sessions useful and relevant to their writing. . . .
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> To summarize, then, I want to argue that these two test cases for Collaborative Planning demonstrate that student control and responsibility is a key issue in the success of planning sessions. Getting students to understand that they will benefit only when they take initiative to define problems and explore possibilities is at least as important as helping them to understand the rhetorical prompts. I also suggest that students may need some practice in talking about their writing and in listening in order to help a partner develop a plan; also, it may be important to allow students to become socially comfortable with responding to other students' writing. Finally, given the difficulty that Craig and Ed had in talking about their writing, it may be a good idea to have students begin Collaborative Planning by talking about a preliminary draft of a text or notes from brainstorming. Students may need the security of text to be able to begin talking and responding to plans. However, they also need to understand that Collaborative Planning is not peer editing. Its purpose is to explore and develop plans, not to edit grammar and punctuation.

Allegheny Presbyterian Center
North Side
Joyce Baskins and Wayne Peck

Wayne Peck, Director of the Allegheny Presbyterian Center, describes the setting of the community center that served as the fourth site for the project during the pilot year.

> Allegheny Presbyterian Center is an ecumenical organization located on the North Side of Pittsburgh. It is housed in an old red brick six-story building that forms the hub of a busy inner city neighborhood. Neighbors participate in the life of our center in many ways. Among other things, people come to worship, to sing, to talk, to swim, to read, to write. In light of our location, Allegheny Presbyterian Center is a "community center" in the true sense of the word. Adjacent to to the center stands an elementary school, a middle school, a metropolitan hospital, a large mall, an office complex, a commercial district and a number of residential areas. Over the years, the composition of our neighborhood has evolved to embrace a rich multi-cultural mix of rich and poor, young and old, white and yellow and black many of whom participate in the life of the center. The mission of Allegheny Presbyterian Center is to support, to promote, and to explore the on-going literate practices of our neighbors.

Establishing a project site in the community was important for *The Making Thinking Visible Project* because writing in the community is important. Wayne describes the role of writing in the North Side community.

> People read and write for various reasons and in many different ways in a community center. A great deal of the writing that is done in a neighborhood context is "collaborative," "action-oriented" and "strategic." Neighbors frequently collaborate to persuade and to influence audiences, to engage neighbors, and to inform residents of community related issues and opportunities. For instance, a group of concerned citizens organize themselves to write a letter to Senator Heinz to inform him of parking problems on the North Side caused by workers at the Heinz factory parking their cars on neighborhood streets rather than in the factory parking lot. This type of writing is "collaborative." It is a literate way that a groups of residents can join together to solve a thorny community problem. It requires that neighbors reach some consensus regarding the problem at hand and have the requisite skills to plan and to produce a document that expresses the neighborhood's will. Whether neighbors meet with the purpose of influencing a politician or engaging a person with the power to make good things happen in the neighborhood, neighborhood writing is action-oriented and strategic. Writing is a powerful way that community members take action in order to achieve their aims, purposes, and goals. The citizen's group makes the strategic decision to send a copy of the letter not only to Senator Heinz but also to the local newspapers to generate public support for their agenda.
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> Another closely related type of collaborative writing with a strategic intent is grant writing within a neighborhood context . Since funding is an eternal problem for inner city community centers, neighbors regularly come together to draft funding applications to foundations and corporations.

Neighbors meet to share their views, concerns, and values and to collaborate in constructing a vision of what their neighborhood needs and what the neighborhood "could be" in the future. These visions, values and appeals are then skillfully fashioned into broad-based conscensus-oriented written proposals that are sent to funding agencies to consider. Writing, in these instances, is a form of literate problem solving. The writing process is collaborative, purposeful, strategic and action-oriented.

A second important type of collaborative writing done in a neighborhood context is "transactional" writing. Neighbors regularly meet with the purpose of "takin'care of business." To use a phrase of a neighborhood resident named Raheim, this is writing that "gets thing done." Neighbors collaborate to write pieces that inform, warn or invite community residents to be aware of significant issues, problems, and opportunities that are happening or about to take place in the neighborhood. In a similar manner, writers in a community context gather to draft reports to various audiences such as community groups, city agencies and funding organizations. These reports are extremely important to maintaining the communal fabric of a neighborhood in that they form the gossamer web of agreements that connect different constituencies in an inner city environment. One measure of the health and vitality of a city neighborhood is the extent to which its residents connect with each other informing, reporting and commenting on community events. Writing is one way connections are made. Successful writing in a neighborhood context is writing that generates grounds for action and in the process creates options for social change. Writing in these situations demand that writers develop "cooperative" writing strategies which have the power to elicit agreement on issues across different ages and races of people who come to the groups with differing levels of literate competence.

A third important context for writing within a community center is the use of writing to further individual and group learning agendas. Writing is a way of learning. Many people come to community centers to read and to write with the intention of gaining and sharpening the literate skills they feel are necessary for enhancing their lives and improving their chances of success. From one to one tutoring sessions with young children to computer assisted writing instruction with teen agers and adults, community centers are providing programs that support life long literate learning. It is within this learning context at Allegheny Presbyterian Center that we are exploring the effects of collaborative planning among intergenerational groups of writers.

One of the Allegheny Presbyterian Center's group leaders, Joyce Baskins, explains that because their center is "at the cross-roads of the community, we have the unique opportunity to bring together different groups of people to work for creative change in our neighborhood." This mission provides an understandable foundation for the WRITE Program that has been started at the Allegheny Presbyterian Center as part of The Making Thinking Visible Project. Wayne Peck describes the program's structure and purpose. He then identifies the key questions that formed the impetus for the inquiry that he conducted with his colleagues Joyce Baskins and Juliet Langman.

The WRITE Program at Allegheny Presbyterian Center was an inter-racial and inter-generational group of writers who gathered to write a community brochure over a 16-week period. The purpose of the brochure

was to change in some positive way the negative image of the northside as a community. The group was composed of six teenager residents of the northside who attended three different Pittsburgh high schools and three adults who were members of the staff at Allegheny Presbyterian Center. Given the differences in age, in social roles, in race, in experience and world knowledge, to say nothing about the differing levels of writing competence, I was curious whether the Collaborative Planning would enable the participants to form a collective identity as writers sharing a common task and whether a sense of group ownership over the process and the product of the group would emerge. Given the fact that we were composing a collaborative product, how would decisions about purpose, about audience, about the text conventions, about topic knowledge be made and who would make those decisions as we used the collaborative planning model?

Part of any inquiry involves honest identification of problems that arise. Joyce Baskins discusses one issue unique to the structure of the community center's work with Collaborative Planning.

There were problems because we, the adults attempted to deal with the students as equals yet, they clearly needed a supervisor, teacher, or director and often focused on us as the leaders. This problem occurred because we were trying to have a program in which the writers would not feel as thought they were in a school classroom. In light of their accomplishments--the use of Collaborative Planning and the completion of their project--there are indications that learning can happen in a nonacademic setting.

Joyce identifies other problems that occurred:

We found it difficult to teach the writers to become good supporters when working in the dyads. The supporter often claimed ownership of an idea, was critical without being able to suggest or prompt, and in many cases just agreed with the writer because he/she lacked the ability to support.

As a result, the adults and students often worked in a larger group, still using the techniques of Collaborative Planning. This practice enabled less experienced writers to see adults model good supporter behaviors.

Like the other project teams, the group leaders at the Allegheny Presbyterian Center based their inquiry on their own field notes and on self-reports from the student writers involved. In a description of the exit interviews that were conducted, Wayne reports an interesting observation about the "ownership" of the project. He supports his observations with quotations from the student writers involved.

During the exit interviews, I was genuinely surprised by the vehemence of the responses of the teen agers in the group regarding the question of whether they had a sense of personal ownership over the final product. Tammy's remarks are indicative of the younger writers initial shock when she realized the older writers were not going to tell the group what to do.

Tammy: At first the adults owned it and we were sitting back to see what you wanted us to do. But then we kind of... kind of realized that .. that you didn't have any idea either .. that upset me

Yet after the initial upset of being placed in an environment in which the group collaboratively planned the younger members of the group expressed a strong sense of ownership and personal pride in the work that was done.

Andrea: We owned it. Adults helped but its our brochure.

Along with these feelings of ownership were other important "social shifts" in the ways that younger writers regarded being in a cooperative project with older adults.

Tyrone: The collaborative planning made it easier for me and the others to be with you guys. It took some time to get the hang of it but it helped us understand where you were comin' from.

Joyce also identified what she called exciting results

. . . there was a building of a cooperative structure [in the group], and once it began to help the writers, they were increasingly willing to do more difficult tasks. Collaborative Planning helped build their confidence as writers and prompted an awareness that there is a wider perspective than just their own.

1989-90 Making Thinking Visible Project

Center for the Study of Writing **Carnegie Mellon University**	Linda Flower, Project Director Nancy Spivey, Director of Project Assessment Linda Norris, Educational Coordinator Rebecca Burnett Thomas Hajduk Wayne Peck David Wallace
Allderdice High School	Andrea Martine
Allegheny Presbyterian Center	Wayne Peck, Executive Director Joyce Baskins Joan Ewart
Community College of **Allegheny County**	Jean Aston Andrea Martine Pamela Turley
Fox Chapel High School	Michael Benedict
Kittanning Junior High School	Penny Pence
North Hills High School	James Brozick
Peabody High School	Leonard Donaldson Jane Zachary Gargaro Karen Gist
Robert Morris College	James Vincent
Steel Valley High School	Leslie Evans
University of Pittsburgh	Nancy Atkinson Linda Norris William Smith Pamela Turley

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